

O T H O

A N D

R U T H A:

A DRAMATIC TALE.

By Miss E D W A R D S.

*All Nature is but Art unknown to thee ;  
All Chance, Direction which thou canst not see ;  
All Discord, Harmony not understood ;  
All Partial Evil, Universal Good :  
And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.*

POPE'S Essay on Man.

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# A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Written by a Friend.

**H**OWever generally and justly those introductory discourses called *Prefaces* have of late been neglected; yet the author of the subsequent performance has been advised by some of her friends, on whose taste and judgement she depends, that it would be highly improper to send such a production into the world without a few preliminary observations, in which its nature and design may be explained.

The kind reception given by the world to her former publication, encourages her to flatter herself, that the Tale, of which a specimen was printed at the end of that collection, will be entertained with the same candour and humanity. The characters and incidents of which it is composed, were delineated and arranged at a period when retirement and indisposition rendered every other occupation irksome, laborious, or impracticable. The piece was afterwards communicated to some of her most intimate and particular friends, for their private amusement. Those generous critics seemed fully persuaded, that the various emotions and sentiments which the work was intended to

a 2 inspire,

inspire, and cultivate, were equally calculated to entertain and to form the human heart; and that for the same reason, it would be equally acceptable to the public.

It is called a *Dramatic Tale*, because, in conducting the story, the author is removed as far as possible from the scene, and the narration left to be pursued by the persons who were supposed to be engaged in it. These are exhibited with the motives, manners, passions, and sentiments, which ought naturally to influence and animate them in similar situations.

It differs from ordinary narration, by the minuteness of its painting, the strength and boldness of its colouring, and the artificial order of its events. It differs likewise from the Theatrical Drama, by the recitals which are interspersed, and by its less scrupulous observation of unity in action, time, and place; which are so indispensably necessary in performances adapted to the stage. Nor is it less distinguishable from the epopee, by the modesty of its diction, the absence of supernatural agents, and the nature of its catastrophe, which may be more various, and less striking, than that of Epic poetry.

For this species of writing the author has good reason to believe, that ancient and venerable precedents might be quoted. Of those she has at present one or two in her eye, whose splendour adorns  
the

the monuments of Jewish, and eclipses those of Gentile antiquity. But in deference to some readers, whose feelings may be more irritable, and whose mode of thinking more contracted than others, she forbears to mention them.—Before the rude and circumforaneous representations of Theſpis; before Herodotus had exhibited the regular form, and marked the specific differences of History, Homer those of the Heroic Poem, or Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, those of Tragedy; it is probable that the Lyric Ode, however sublime and beautiful, was thought a vehicle inadequate to the purposes of extending and preserving the memory of noble characters, and heroic deeds. These effusions of enthusiastic admiration were possibly at first delivered in cadenced or measured prose; even the Dithyrambics of Pindar are said to be in a great measure free from the restraint of numbers. Now if we suppose the plan of the Lyric Ode extended, every reader of taste and erudition will plainly perceive, how easy and natural the transition from it to the Dramatic narrative. This conjecture is considerably supported by the fragment of Musæus, containing the story of Hero and Leander, if genuine.

The author's design is to inculcate such truths as are of eternal and essential importance to human life: first, That its whole œconomy is superintended and regulated by a wise and beneficent Providence, which renders its most gloomy vicissitudes, and adverse occurrences, ultimately productive

productive of the highest felicity ; not only to communities, but even to individuals ; secondly, That every external advantage which man can either acquire or possess, is laborious in its attainment, faithless in its pretences, and unsatisfactory in its fruition ; thirdly, That piety and virtue, improved and cultivated, constitute the supreme happiness of an intelligent creature.

It may still be requisite to add, that the names of persons and places here contained, will be found in no history, no system of geography, no atlas, or gazetteer, yet extant. For though many of the persons introduced are real, and many of the events founded in truth ; yet it became necessary to add others, by which the story might at once be connected and embellished. Now though the persons who really acted in the scene must have had “ a local habitation,” and “ a name ;” yet it appeared highly absurd, to mix real and fictitious denominations in the same composition. It was therefore judged more expedient and natural, that personal and local names should be formed, and adapted to the characters and exigences by which they were suggested. It is true, the reader will meet with the names of Otho, Zenobia, Astyanax, and others. But he will be likewise sensible, that this Otho is not the same who conspired against Galba ; nor the Zenobia she who so nobly defended Palmira ; nor Astyanax the son of Hector and Andromache. These names, therefore, though real in themselves, are fictitious in the present work.

SPEAKERS.

## S P E A K E R S.

### M E N.

Ludovico, King of Polyolbion.

Agendemon, his son and successor.

Otho, Earl of Polycrene, prime minister to Ludovico.

Otho, son to the Earl of Polycrene.

Rutha, Lord of Agathea, one of Agendemon's ministers.

Hermit, friend to Otho and Rutha.

Elpenor, Lord of Cacophron, enemy to Otho.

Philoculus, son to Otho.

Gusto, prime minister to Agendemon.

Lord Trinkello, one of Ludovico's nobles.

Avignor, a depraved youth, enemy to Otho.

Alphonso, friend to Alonzo.

Lord Arco.

Gelin, supposed son to Lord Arco.

Alronald, hermit in the deserts of Erema.

Alranchid, King of Zathia.

Alranchid, son and successor to the King of Zathia.

Prince Ranselmo, brother to the King of Zathia.

Ranselmo, his son.

Melibeus, faithful servant to Prince Ranselmo.

Albosad, tutor to Alranchid.

Heraculus, an officer of high rank from the kingdom of Polyolbion.

Orchilas,



Orchilas, betrothed to Emmira.  
Agefilas, false to Orchilas.

W O M E N.

Selina, Queen of Polyolbion, and wife to Agendemon.  
Vanessa, } wives to Otho.  
Sabina, }  
Ermina, married to Lord Rutha.  
Alzira, daughter to Rutha.  
Almira, married to Avignor.  
Ufebia, Queen of Zathia.  
Senobia, Queen of Panurge.  
Princess Meliza, cousin to Queen Senobia, and married to Prince Ranselmo.  
Zila, daughter to Lord Arco.

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E R R A T A.

p. 158. l. 13. For RINALDO read ALPHONSO.  
p. 179. l. 10. For Alransfacher read Alranchid.  
16. For Alranchid read Alransfacher.



OTHO and RUTHA.

A DRAMATIC TALE.

## CHAPTER I.

Отно.

**T**HE wind blows over my head as I sit by the  
purling stream. Sad and disconsolate I sit  
alone. I speak; but there is none to hear  
me: I vent my sighs to the hollow rocks. The  
rocks, more soft than tyrant man, seem sensible of  
my complaints; and the breezes sigh responsive to  
my moan. Oh! when shall my woes be still?  
when shall remembrance cease to wound me? In-  
gratitude, black as hell, denies my soul its ease,  
and poisons all my joys. But surely death, the  
wretch's last relief, shall quickly end the scene.  
Then shall I dwell in the land of Silence, and sleep  
in peace with my mighty ancestors. Hark! sure  
I hear the tread of feet. Methought I had seclu-  
ded myself from prying Curiosity, and breathed  
out my sorrows unknown. Fall upon me, ye tall  
cedars! hide me, if possible, from man. I would  
associate with beasts of prey, and find them less de-  
structive

fructive to my peace than soothing faithless mortals. — But, ha ! my friend, my Rutha ! How shall I avoid him ?

RUTHA.

Otho ! my kind indulgent friend ! a prey to silent grief ! how shall mine eyes behold the scene, and not turn blind with wo ? How fare you, Otho ? why is your venerable head uncovered in the desert, a prey to the warring elements and rising storm ? With the anguish of a friend have I searched out your retreat. Pour now your grief into this faithful bosom, and I will try to ease you.

OTHO.

Rutha ! Rutha ! do mine eyes again behold you ? Alas ! I am no more that Otho you have known, filling with joy the hearts of the distressed. No more with plenty are my barns crowned, nor fatness dropping from my table. There has the hungry oft been filled, and dire calamity has lost its edge. Oft has a beam of joy shone on the mournful brow ; and Grief itself, at my approach, assumed an air of mirth. Silence dwells in my halls, so late the residence of friendly intercourse. No more does the echoing horn resound through the plain, and awake the early huntsman. And worst of all, my ruined family are left to wander helpless and exposed. Ah me ! my Rutha ! how can I, who am the cause of all their wo, support their misery ?

RUTHA.

## RUTHA.

My soul is wounded to behold your tears, and all my firmness sinks into the child. You who so lately was the poor man's friend, and by his dire oppressors seen with terror, now lie extended on the earth, just like an oak by some untimely blast blown up, and all its rising branches lopt away. Oh! let me lead thee from this desert wild. Near to the entrance of this humble vale, I spied a little hut, the mean, but happy dwelling of an aged hermit: thither let us bend our steps, and seek a shelter from this dreadful storm. Hark! the thunder roars! the lightnings fly before us! it is more than Nature long can bear. Make haste, good Otho; leave this solitude. Here let the guilty find security. Calamity itself ought never to triumph over virtue such as yours.

## OTHO.

O! leave me, Rutha! leave me to my grief: for soon, I think, it will bear me where no care can enter. My soul is sick of this distracted scene; and evils rush so fiercely o'er my soul, they have swept my peace away. And, what is worse, my friend, the man whose life to save I could have risked my own, has struck the blow. O Rutha! I have a tale of woe to utter that would pain your heart. But why with unavailing murmurs wound your peace? Think not I fear the warring elements. I tell thee, Rutha, were they all combined with their united force, they could not hurt

like false Ingratitude's envenom'd sting. Fly from the smooth insinuating smile, the subtle promise of a man in power : The sacred delegates of Heaven they seem, and lull us to repose ; but ah ! my honest friend, they dream not of hereafter ; though yon awful thunderer from above weighs all their actions in an equal scale, and will at last reward them. Farewell. Rutha, leave this gloomy grove ; for here it is certain I will end my days.

RUTHA.

Has sad Calamity so far overwhelmed the noble firmness of my Otho's soul, as make him cowardly forsake his post, and fall a victim to the crime of villains ? Can you believe my heart remains as unconcerned spectator of your wo, and leave you like the world to sigh alone ? No : on my bended knee I here intreat you, rise : take pity on your friend ; for, by the sacred powers above I swear, I will never leave you. One tomb shall here receive us ; and the wind shall quickly cover us with leaves, and from the wandering traveller conceal our lifeless trunks, if ever chance shall bring a traveller to this desert. Farewell, World : thou dwelling of busy men : henceforth we shall converse the mighty dead, and learn a language altogether new. Farewell, Friends : my kindred all, adieu : for Otho, thou art dearer to my soul than kindred, friends, and world.

OTHO.

OTHO.

O Rutha! generous noble Rutha! thou hast overcome me. Thy godlike friendship sure is past example. Give me your hand, and I will follow whither thou shalt lead. Thou art like the glorious luminary that cheers creation, wading through the mist, and gladdening all around. For sure my heart, till thou appearedst, was cold as death, and clouded over with sorrow. Thy presence has dispelled the gloom, and beamed in joy upon me. But yet thy honest, candid, faithful heart, could never dream the ills I have endured. My house by desperate ruffians rifled, and made bare; my happy family dissolved; my fair Sabina, the dear partner of my joys or grief, with streaming eyes, midst all the horrors of the midnight hour, forced to the woods to fly for shelter. She, and my helpless infants, were denied mine aid and succour in their keen distress; myself obliged to skulk, and, coward-like, seek refuge for this head, doomed to be miserable, lest confinement dire had next befallen me. But where the lovely injured excellence is now, the Heavens alone can tell. O Rutha! could I dare to look her in the face, whom I deserted in her bitterest wo!

RUTHA.

I am not ignorant, my noble Otho, how thou hast been used by cruel Agendemon. I know how that insinuating villain Gusto, step by step,  
cooled



cooled his affection towards thee. Jealous of your growing honours, he practised your ruin, and kindled up the flame that blazed upon thee. Alas! my friend! who in this fleeting wilderness can call themselves secure? Honours, like shadows, pass ere well perceived; or, like a midnight-meteor, quickly die. It is virtue only that can make us smile, in spite of Fortune's frown. Rich in itself, it needs no borrowed ornament; but looks most bright seen through the glass of sharp Calamity. And when it throws away this mortal tenement, it mounts above yon rolling spheres, and far outshines the sun in lustre bright. There, there, my Otho, shall the good man shine; nor shall Oppression, Cruelty, or Rage, e'er more assault him.

OTHO.

How all my sorrows fly at your discourse, and peace and happiness beam in upon me! Sure it was my guardian angel sent thee hither, to rouse me from despair: thou hast learned me to act a nobler part, and triumph over distress by bearing it. Oh! my Rutha! I am ashamed to tell thee, that I meanly did intend to end my days in woe, and pine away with grief. Methinks this rugged way seems smooth by thy engaging converse; and this dreadful rain just like the gentle dew. Such is the power of friendship. How far have we to wander ere we reach the hermit's seat?

RUTHA



## RUTHA.

Just a little further : at the foot of this descent, there runs a purling stream, that glides between these mountains. By trees encircled round, there stands his little dwelling, just the reverse of grandeur, or of woe. It is built of turf, the inside lined with birch ; and here and there an osier shelf, to hold his books. Thus, quite retired from earth, and all its vain pursuits, by meditation, prayer, and other exercise, he fits his soul for heaven. Lo ! yonder is the good old man, just at the entry of his little dwelling, gazing at the stars : and sure I can discern more lights than one blink from his lonely hut. Either I have been mistaken, or some unhappy person, like ourselves, have been relieved by his humanity. Behold ! he eyes us with surprise, I think with pity mixed. Do you, good Otho, give him a salutation.

## OTHO.

Hail ! Venerable Father, sole master of this lonely place ! suffer the children of Affliction to salute thee. Tired with the ills of life, and false ingratitude of perverse men, we sought a refuge in this wilderness ; chusing to herd with beasts of prey, less savage than the creatures we have fled. Yet Nature frail recoiled at this fell storm, and made us fly where we might find relief. By thy appearance, one would judge thou art past the ills of life, and wisely flyest from man's deceitful converse, to hold it with superior beings. We  
prostrate

prostrate at your feet, and thus demand your blessing.

HERMIT.

Arise, my brethren! May he whose goodness rules the world support you in your keen distress. Children of Affliction, dost thou say? I give you joy, as by that path ye will arrive at peace. Long did I wander in the ways of woe, pushed on by blind ambition, and a false desire of being great. Alas! we have imperfect views of grandeur; and, like an idiot, eying some high pinnacle, whose top he fain would reach, but trudges on in bogs and mires, till, quite immersed, he loses his first ardour, then sits down content. But it is improper here to spend your time in words. Ye have too long endured this bitter storm; and Nature sure must need support. Then follow me, and I will lead thee to my peaceful cot; where I, retired from human converse, see the seasons roll. Waked by the soaring lark, I leave my homely bed, and taste the pleasant silent hour, the gentle dawn of morn. That is the time for meditation, prayer, and sacred thought, when all the soul is calm. And when the Sun's broad beams too scorching prove, I to some cool refreshing spring repair; under the covert of some grateful shade I lay me down, my faithful dog stretched by my side; there with the dead I hold sweet conversation, or the book of Nature read with vast delight. Then doth still Evening come, and with her brings a philosophic calmness; bids the warbling songsters

songsters take a pause. I likewise offer up my  
 song of praise, and seek repose. Thus, day by  
 day, unenvied or envying, I steal life's round a-  
 way. A little longer, and I will pass that dark  
 and gloomy path whereof no mortal ever came  
 back to give right information. But then alone  
 the good man only lives. Here we but breathe;  
 yonder we will soar with angels, and reap the  
 fruits of abstinence below. Then cease to grieve at  
 what thou termest *distress*; and which, if rightly  
 seen, would change its name. The virtuous are  
 not always blessed on earth. Affliction clears the  
 rust away, which dims our noblest lustre. For  
 whilst we eagerly pursue the goods of life, and in  
 the heedless paths of pleasure wander, ah me!  
 my brethren, all within is wild disorder; and the  
 chiefest part of life forgot, that which gives dig-  
 nity to all our actions, rectitude within. The  
 soul alone is capable of happiness; and that must  
 flow from rational delights. Fair modest Virtue,  
 daughter of the skies, oft flies the throng, and to  
 some shade retires. There Wisdom to the soul  
 opens all her treasures, and points to the way to  
 perfect peace.

OTHO.

With wonder and amaze I hear his words,  
 which fall more sweet than honey dropping from  
 the combs; and over my mind, oppressed with  
 wo, soft peace is spread. O Hermit! pious soul!  
 who by devotion, prayer, and other exercise, art  
 grown familiar with the sons of Heaven! by thee

B

I

I am cured of folly, which had nigh overwhelm-  
ed me. With other eyes I now behold my fate,  
at which I mourned. I now could lift my voice  
to joy, were dear Sabina to my arms restored. I  
in some wilderness could end my days; nor ever  
think on Agendemon more. But, ah! dear Ru-  
tha! there my weakness lies; that wound incur-  
able will ever pain me.

## HERMIT.

Why dost thou murmur at the ills of life, or  
wisth the inexplicable ways of Heaven for thee re-  
versed? Nor ever dream yourself the only man  
who of the bitter cup have deeply drank, or trod  
the paths of Care. Reflect, whilst the correcting  
hand of Heaven thus humbles you in dust; look  
inward, and conceive it is all to try the metal of  
your soul; and as you stand the test, the gloomy  
veil will be removed; and you emerge, like  
Night's majestic queen, after the earth's opposing  
grossness rolled away, which had eclipsed her  
beams.

This day eventful scenes have come before me.  
A little past the twilight, as I took my walk with-  
in the most retired recesses of the wood, and sel-  
dom trod by human foot, I laid me down, be-  
neath a stately oak, whose spreading branches  
were reflected in the silent lake, which to the eye  
of the beholder presents both leaves and stars. An  
universal silence reigned; my very breathing seem-  
ed a noise. When I a while had given my me-  
ditations



ditations vent, I heard a plaintive sound; it seem-  
 ed a female voice, so faint it almost died away  
 before it reached me. I reasoned with myself,  
 who in this lonely place could thus lament? and  
 the dark lowering sky foretold the coming storm.  
 Ye blessed immortal Powers! I cried, that this  
 sequestered vale at once should veil from public  
 view the happy and the miserable. I started up,  
 and wondering stood, uncertain where to turn;  
 when, lo! mine ear again invaded was, with  
 sounds, soft as an angel's song heard at the mid-  
 night-hour by dying faints, thus breaking si-  
 lence.

O fable Night! with all thy terrors thou canst  
 not affright me: thou canst not show a colour  
 equal to my mind. Blow upon me, O Wind!  
 and whispering through the trees, O lull my  
 woes to rest. Ah me! here in this desert I must  
 mourn in vain. The rocks, the murmuring stream,  
 do not relieve me. Inconstant Fortune! lately  
 was I favoured with thy smiles, with all the flat-  
 tering pomp thou canst inspire; when, lo! thy  
 countenance fell: thou didst frown upon me, and  
 I was undone. In one ill-fated hour I was de-  
 prived of all that gilded life, or made it worth my  
 care. Oh! Heaven, restore me to—— Then  
 her voice died away: a stream of tears denied her  
 thoughts a passage. I moved toward her with  
 impatient steps, to help, if possible, a mortal in  
 distress; when, at the foot of a huge hollow rock,  
 from whose bottom issues forth a limpid brook, in

all the elegance of wo, lay Beauty in despair, just like a lily, blooming in the wild, by some untimely blast defaced. Soon as the boughs, touched by my garments, gave her notice of my near approach, she, with a timid and beseeching look, arose, and threw herself before me. O stranger! she cried, whose grave deportment would bespeak thee more than mortal: If thou art some mighty spirit of the desert, O help a frail unhappy woman! speak, and ease my fears. Rise, daughter, I replied; be not afraid: in me thou dost behold the remnant and remains of youth and strength, by age and watching now grown pale and meagre. Give me your hand, and I will lead you to my peaceful cot, where you may take repose. With modest dignity she arose. I led her, fearful and overcast with doubts, through bog and brake; and must confess I felt emotions full of sympathy, mingled with a strong desire to know what wayward blow of Fate had plunged her down in such excess of wo. But judging rest the fittest remedy, I made her seek repose. — A philosophic curiosity excites me to expose myself, whilst thunder roars. Thus did I meet with thee. Thank Heaven, my brethren, that my solitary hut proves an asylum to distress and virtue.

OTHO.

O Hermit! pious soul, thou art indeed my guardian angel! If what my heart forebodes be true, thou hast saved my dearer half. In your description, I behold the lovely fair Sabina.



is surely she ! Her lively grief proclaims it. My heart, overcome with warring passions, grows too big for utterance, — wants proper words to thank you. — He faints !

SABINA.

Pardon me, most rever'd of men ! for this intrusion so abrupt ; but either my senses are deceived, or the well-known sounds of my loved lord approached mine ear, in accents so bemoaning, doleful, sad, they have pierced me to the heart, and made me fly to sooth and share them. Oh ! Heavens ! what do mine eyes behold ? Otho on the ground ! it is too much. — Ye blessed Powers, support me ! — She falls upon his neck ! — He opens his eyes !

HERMIT.

Be not disturbed, O man to ills inured ! now shall your woes be over, and every gloomy care give place to joy. Afflictions oft-times pave the way to peace : reject not, therefore, the advice ; nor let thine aid be wanting to bring good from evil. — See she moves !

OTHO.

Have I then found thee, O Sabina ! my beloved, thou brightest ornament of all my fortune ? in whose sweet presence each unruly passion flies ashamed. To thee restored, all states will be delightful. Awake, my love ! and in my faithful arms lose every care.

SABINA.

SABINA.

Is this a dream, a sweet delusion of the brain? or do I really breathe within thy arms, my noble Otho? Then all my woes are past. No more shall Fortune, mercilefs and cruel, nor Fate, with all its ministers fell and dire, e'er part us! — But say, my worthy lord, where hast thou been? or by what miracle your life preserved? What chance procured this happy meeting?

OTHO.

What have I not endured since I beheld thee last, my fair Sabina? All that you can imagine dismal fell upon me. But it was thine absence I bewailed more than my fleeting honours; and that thy tender helpless sex wanted my succour in your greatest need. — But since kind Heaven has thus united us in bliss, let us not dwell on themes of sadness.—How fare my children?

SABINA.

Your children all are well. Oft, prattling by my side, they did inquire for thee, and always wondered what detained their sire. This melted me in tenderest wo; nor longer able to endure the cruel combat, I to my faithful nurse committed the dear babes, and in despair I wandered through this desert, resolved to find thee, or perish in the attempt. But Heaven has blessed my rash endeavour with success. I found thee where I least expected.

pected. To this most worthy Hermit I owe my life and happiness. — Ha! Rutha! pardon my mistake; I saw not thee.

RUTHA.

With pleasure and surprise I was struck dumb, and felt the satisfaction of my friends with vast delight. O may it never from this happy hour be less sublime! but may that virtue which has been fore proved, feel yet a spring of happiness below; till, tired of earth, you gently fall asleep, and join your kindred souls in bliss above.

OTHO.

Now, Rutha, give me your hand, thou kindest tenderest friend! by whose soft friendly counsel I am alive: henceforward let us live like children of one family, and tread the paths of Happiness together. Mean time within your hospitable roof, good Venerable Sire, we will retire, and lull fatigued Nature to repose.

HERMIT.

Go to your rest, my children; and may Heaven bless your repose! — Still keep in your mind, this fleeting transient state can soon deprive us of our dearest joys. Go on in Virtue's sacred path; it will of itself reward you with content. Though here it is often scorned, in more superior regions it will bloom and flourish with unfading lustre.

C H A P.

## C H A P. II.

**H**Ail! glorious fountain of light and heat  
 the world revives at thy chearing beams  
 The shades of Darkneſs fly thy approach: when  
 thy fair harbinger, daughter of the dawn, mounts  
 her ruddy chariot in the ſkies, aſtoniſhed Darkneſs  
 ſhrinks aghaſt, and leaves thee undisputed ruler of  
 the day.

Now the thunder had ceaſed to roar. The morn-  
 ing roſe with a pleaſing ray. The herbs and  
 flowers perfumed the air with a ſweeter ſcent  
 and fair Creation looked ſmiling and gay. When  
 Otho left his bed of reſt, Heaven had chaſed a-  
 way corroding Grief, and peaceful ſlumbers re-  
 freſhed his frame. He went forth with a heart  
 elated, and joined the early warblers in a ſong of  
 praife.

## OTHO'S Prayer.

REJOICE in the Lord, O my ſoul! for he up-  
 holdeth thy ſteps. Ariſe in the morning, and  
 hymn aloud his praife. Before the beaſts of the  
 field come forth, or the fowls of heaven leave  
 their neſt, proclaim with humble gratitude his

gracious

gracious ways. Praise the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord, thy bountiful benefactor; who has delivered thee from despair and death; whose watchful providence has conducted thee into the paths of Peace; who has preserved thee through the silent night, and opened thine eyes to the cheerful morn. Up, then, with alacrity, and praise thy Maker: serve him with fear and reverence through the day: obey his commands with pleasure, till life's short date be past: then shall Death approach thee with an angel's form, and become the kind messenger to lead thee into perfect peace.

Thus prayed Otho, and his soul was cheered. The flowers seemed solicitous to court his attention; and every object he beheld, stirred within him a source of joy. He beheld Rutha and the Hermit at a distance. They had got the start of him, and were admiring the wisdom of God, who made thunder and lightning produce such salutary effects upon Nature. He advanced to meet them with hasty steps, and accosted his revered host with the salutations of grateful joy. Behold, Otho! said the Hermit, how beautiful the earth appears! what fine painting adorns all Nature! The air is perfumed with the most delightful fragrance, whilst the artless melody of the groves completes the harmony. Ask each tree or flowering shrub in this blooming wilderness, how they shunned the lightning's blast? or where slept the tuneful tribe, when Nature seemed to



reel, and threatened to expire? Are they rather clad in new beauty? The lively verdure excites delight. Striking emblem, my friend, that blessed calm your mind will soon evince, affianced in the guidance of Heaven, you view the storms that are past as necessary to dispel the mist that dims your intellectual eye, as the thunder has cleared the air, and given refreshment to the earth below. But come; for Morning is yet a child: whilst Sabina sleeps, retire to yonder bower. If my request be not presuming, I long to hear each incident of that life, which Providence has varied with pleasure and pain. — Otho bowed consent; and seating themselves in a pleasing arbour, without any preamble, thus began his tale.

## The History of OTHO.

You desire me, most excellent Hermit, to recall scenes that are past. To thee I owe more than life; and if the vicissitudes that have taken place in mine can claim your attention, hearken whilst I relate the means used by successful Vice to ensnare, and which at last totally overwhelmed unsuspecting Virtue.

From an illustrious line of renowned ancestors derive my birth. But that will avail little to your eye, thou wisest of the sons of men! Where Virtue does not blazon over those accidental circumstances



circumstances, high birth only renders its owners more contemptible. But their names stand high in the list of the brave. Strong were their arms in the war; whilst their wisdom settled, and often preserved the peace.

But I mean not to tire your ear with their exploits, though for ages unnumbered they swelled the rolls of Fame; but it is necessary to give you my father's history, the better to illustrate and make you understand my own.

The potent earldom of Polycrene devolved on his head in the twentieth year of his age, by the death of his father. He revered his mother; and she deserved his filial regard. She presided with judgement and dignity over his affairs; nor ever gave it over till the day of her death. Ludovico, father to Agendemon, was a gracious prince. His strength lay in his people's affections. Whilst they risked their lives and fortunes to preserve his glory, his goodness and wisdom still courted the means to make the former happy, and render the latter secure. — Blessed Prince! whose life is modelled by equity and truth! happy people! on whom Heaven in love and mercy bestows such a prince!

Great souls are quickly enamoured of correspondent virtues; whilst the wicked survey them with malignant spleen, and meanly endeavour to tarnish their lustre. But Ludovico singled my fa-

ther from all his train, and made his breast a repository of his secret thoughts. He repaid that confidence with mutual trust. Sacred silence formed the key which locked them safe in his heart. He acquired the liberty of speaking his thoughts with freedom; when interested courtiers suggested schemes which he conceived hurtful to the public weal, he boldly protested against the measure, though aided by the sovereign voice. This gave rise to cabals and secret intrigues. Dark schemes were put in practice, to sow distrust in his sovereign's heart; all which only crushed the authors, and made his innocence blaze more bright. The King's virtue beheld a conduct so opposite to the servility of a court with the highest applause. He blessed Heaven for giving him a man whose integrity led him to risk his anger, to preserve unsullied his renown. In short, he became prime minister of state. None were admitted to any trust who had not the sanction of his applause. Knowing him above all venal bribes, his recommendations were sure of success; nor could his nearest friends procure his vote, if he deemed them unfit for the office he solicited.

The King delighted to do him honour, calling him the great staff which supported the realm; whilst he, with indefatigable zeal, laboured to banish bribery and corruption; encouraging the arts, by promoting those who were eminent in any of them. Honest Industry raised her head; and smiling

ling Plenty, with an angel's mien, lulled the labourer's heart into peace.

The King had a custom of going with my father in disguise to several parts of the kingdom; where they were entertained as strangers, and had an opportunity of hearing the voice of Truth, and viewing men as they are; found out intrigues ere they were fully ripe, and by an artful conduct crushed them often in the birth; redressed grievances, which oppressed merit modestly concealed; and often had the pleasure of hearing their actions highly extolled. But they did not trust this curious scheme to any ear but their own. There was a castle two miles from court, surrounded with planting, and so contrived as at all times to regale the senses. Art was so disposed as to resemble Nature, and might be justly termed the seat of the Muses. To that delightful place they often retired; and whilst there, it was a crime for any person to invade their privacy. From this place they emerged, undiscerned, to their various routes, and always returned with the same caution.

One day, as my father assisted the King to equip for their private expedition, he pressed his hand betwixt his, and with a gracious smile thus began.

Dear Otho, friend of my heart, and supporter of my fame! no words can utter what I feel  
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through your presence. Mean are the joys which royalty can bring, or the soothing voice of adulation inspire: the thinking mind, mocked with the empty farce, shrinks within itself, demanding more than pomp can bestow. Friendship is banished from courts; Sincerity flies from the monarch's ear; but Friendship alone can sweeten life, and make us anticipate that felicity which awaits us in the regions of the blessed; unmixed with those incidents, which, mingling with our own folly, often thwart the pure flame below. But why does thy solicitude for my glory banish from thy mind what thou owest thyself? Perceivest thou not, my friend, how the rolling years insensibly push thee into the noon of life? Hast thou forgot, that upon thy fleeting breath depends the growth or total extinction of the Othonian line? In vain does Beauty spread its charms to your view: your callous heart resists the soft impression. The ghosts of your noble ancestors glare around us. See the warlike troop beckon mine aid to preserve their decaying race!

My father was moved with this mark of his Majesty's affection. Tears, spite of himself, trickled down his cheek. He told him, the realm had always ingrossed his care; and should he attach himself to a family, that attention would be divided. Hush, Otho! said the King; you must trifle no longer; look round the beauties of the court; to the first of them you may pretend; and always remember I am your friend. But let us  
away:

away: I long to put off the fetters of Majesty. In our excursions, when disguised, we have the felicity of hearing the sentiments of the public, unmixed with Flattery's noxious weed; of enjoying the hospitality of our kind receivers with equality and ease.

They quickly issued forth, and met with adventures too trifling to mention; but returning through the forest of Nape, they were overtaken with a dreadful storm. Thunder and lightning made the desert ring. The livid flames flashing through the gloom, made visible every tree in the wood, and threatened to lay the blooming foliage withered on the ground. Come, Otho! said the King; let us seek a shelter. The angry elements owe us no fealty; and over the rude blustering wind we have no sway. Nigh this wilderness lives Philoxenus, first Knight of my realm. For generous hospitality he is famed; and, lo! a light beams from his hall. Shivering they approached the gate: though the storm had now ceased, they still felt its effects. But the voice of Music charmed their attention, as if some smiling cherub had touched the lyre. Through a window they beheld a nymph, fairer than Arcadia could boast. The Graces played on her artless brow; whilst mingled Dignity drew respect from the soul. She accompanied the lute with her voice, and sung the exploits of Ludovico, assisted by Otho, the right-hand of war. At interesting parts, the notes and voice seemed to die  
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away so irresistibly sweet, that the ravished soul dissolved in ecstasy. Sure, cried my father, in a rapture, this is no mortal form! Some courteous angel has assumed this look, and imitated those sounds, to mitigate our present destiny. Ye Powers of Heaven! he exclaimed, where are we? Gracious Prince, let us fly; for this is all enchantment.

The King smiled; but knocked at the gate, and instantly obtained admittance. Here the distressed traveller found a temporary riddance of every care. The Knight was absent; but his beauteous daughter, fraught with all the hospitality of her sire, welcomed the strangers with a modest grace. The King slyly asked her, what hero it was whose actions she so melodiously rendered up to Fame? She sweetly recited his own renown; and dwelt pathetically on my father's praise. Truth, sanctity, and wisdom, shone in every word. My father felt unknown powers fixing a pleasing empire over his soul; and when the hour of retiring to rest approached, he wondered how the winged moments had flown so swift away. Gray morning appeared, which first whispered him, he had passed a sleepless night. Trembling he left his bed; but the ardour that usually pushed him away from such excursions was not to be found. The King was first equipped, and smiled at his fond delay; for he hovered long about like a shadow; which indeed he was, having left the substance behind. They rode to the  
bower

lower in silence. The King, pleased with his growing passion, interrupted not the soft reverie; and when they arrived, heedless of his wonted duty, he threw himself on the sofa, sighing like the breezes fanned by the western wind. His Majesty burst into a loud laugh; which made him start, and awkwardly attempt an excuse. But the King's raillery grew too severe. He was fain to avow the hidden flame that glowed within him, and begged the fair Angelina might be procured for his wife. The motion pleased the King; and my father went in his own form to wait on the Knight; and had the pleasure to find, that in his disguise he had likewise charmed the maid. The Knight thought his alliance an honour; and their nuptials were celebrated with the utmost splendour, assisted by the King, and all the nobles of the court. He carried her to the hall of his fathers. He had neglected it for the service of the King; who, in return, made it again shine in former splendour. Sweet were the first days of their union, and pleasant the end thereof! A love fixed like theirs knows no satiety, nor terminates with mortal life. — Blessed pair! ye now inhabit the regions of the just, filled with that divine flame which never shall decay.

I was the sole pledge of their affection: my birth gave universal joy, and occasioned the song of the bards. Fair and unclouded rose the morn of my life. Be humbled, ye proud! whose heads are lifted high. Who could have thought this

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child of Fortune and Fame, in a few circling years, by a sad reverse, would become the outcast of both?

My father's attendance on the King threw the tuition of my tender years on my mother's care; which she executed in a manner superior to the generalities of her sex. Her soul was the mansion of Wisdom and Virtue. She imprinted the sacred lessons on my heart; which became obedient in her hands, as ready to the winds of Summer. By her address, the precepts of Religion and Virtue stole unawares upon me. She never strained the young mind beyond its pitch; but watched the opening dawn; and as it could conceive, let the grand precepts of Christianity beam in full splendour, to allure, to captivate, to force into practice those beautiful truths, whose lustre shines so bright in this present scene, and promised immense rewards when time should utterly decay.

My father, pleased with my growing abilities, appointed me an able tutor; and when I had attained my tenth year, I was brought to court.

The King ordered me a place among the princes; and often gave me marks of his approbation. Dear to my young heart were the first marks of my Sovereign's applause: it made me sedulous to gain his esteem. In every branch of literature, I made surprising progress; and soon surpassed all my copartners in renown. Agendemon, who was

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some years older, showed little taste for abstruse  
 learning; but in every martial exercise he excel-  
 led; was of a comely presence, and majestic de-  
 portment. Agriculture was his chief study; in  
 which, through time, he became a proficient. He  
 could name every herb of the field, and its use;  
 and in cultivating the blooming parterre he took  
 vast delight. But his ear was not shut to the  
 voice of Praise; though he was emulous to de-  
 serve it. But, alas! the language of a court is all  
 disguise. The sycophant often assumes Sincerity's  
 fair form, and leads the unsuspecting heart astray.  
 That weakness in the heart of Agendemon was the  
 source from whence the mingled miseries of my  
 life took their rise. He loved pleasure, and could  
 brook no controul; but concealed those inclina-  
 tions from the King, by an exterior appearance of  
 virtue. An engaging address gained him every  
 heart. The aged courtiers exulted in his grow-  
 ing worth; whilst the sycophant, on whom worth  
 has no power, worshipped the rising sun, which  
 was one day to gild their hemisphere. A war  
 with his allies broke out, through the ambition  
 of Gerald, one of the princes of Calitopia. He  
 invaded his dominions in a hostile manner; and  
 would have made Ludovicø tributary to his ava-  
 rice. The method the King always kept, pre-  
 vented any disorder. A council of his ablest  
 statesmen were convened, and an army instantly  
 sent to the field. Agendemon appeared like the  
 god Mars, shining in splendid array; like a fair  
 tree in spring, whose blooming foliage delights



the eye. I too was honoured with command though only in my fifteenth year. How my young heart was elated with the prospect of fame! and bounded with the hope of signalising myself in some worthy exploit! Fortune guided my arm to save Agendemon from the fury of his foes. His valour pushed him into the hottest part of the battle.

I beheld him fiercely assailed on all hands, to overcome by numbers, he was tumbled from his horse. This sight distracted me. I rushed in for his relief, without thinking on my own danger. Despair guided my arm, which dealt destruction at every blow. Astonishment seized my enemies and aided my conquest. But long it could not have availed me, had not a number of brave men viewed my situation, and flown to my relief. The confusion of their entrance made our foes give way; and inspired us with courage. We fought like men who were determined to sell our lives and liberties at the dearest rate. The shadow of night increased the horror: a cry of victory from our side occasioned universal terror: Disorder stalked on every hand: our foes were discomfited, and put to flight.

The prince and I were carried off the field covered with blood and dust. I had many wounds all over my body; but the applause received from all the officers more than balanced my pains. Agendemon called me his deliverer; and wrote for me an encomium



encomiums of my action to the King, that the whole court resounded with my fame.

Gerald's army were so routed, that he was glad to mention terms of peace ; which Ludovico concluded on honourable conditions.

But I must not omit an incident which took place during our residence there, as you will find, by the sequel of my history, it is connected with some interesting parts of my life. One night as I was patrolling round the camp, the moon shone with unclouded lustre. I strayed insensibly towards a wood at some distance. A pleasing river displayed the waving branches in its pure bosom. A cry of distress roused me from my reverie ; and its repetition made me fly after the sound. Help ! help ! for Heaven's sake ! echoed from a female voice, was enough to rouse all my ardour. Upon coming up to the place, I found a chariot driving on with violence ; a lady striving to disengage herself from a man that forcibly detained her. I cut the reins, and ordered the driver to stop at his peril. My glittering blade, and determined aspect, struck him dumb. But the man in the chariot bade him drive on, asking what boldness made me interfere in their affairs. O save a hapless maid ! said the lady, and the blessed Powers will reward the deed. And you shall be saved, O beautiful nymph ! I replied, or my life shall fly away in your defence. Here I opened the chariot-door, to pull her by force from

from her ravisher. But he, determined to defend his prize, made a push at me with his sword.

I pulled him to the ground, and we fought with keenness. I got a wound in my shoulder ; but made a push at my antagonist, which tumbled him to the ground.

Tell me, wretch ! said I, who has put you on this horrid action ? Your life is in my hand ; and from your devoted head Truth only can ward the blow.

Carry her to the Prince, said the fault'ring wretch. She is destined to make him happy ; it is by his orders I act ; and if you are a subject, you will not dare to baffle Agendemon in his pleasures.

Infamous impeacher ! I replied ; stain not the Prince with an act so vile. Myself will carry you to his presence ; where your villany will be confounded, and meet its reward. At this the afflicted fair sprung from the chariot, wrung her hands, and fell at my feet. She was beautiful as an angel ; her beseeching posture, and plaintive accents, might have moved an anchorite, thus accosting me.

Next to divine preserver of mine honour, may thy noble conduct to me draw Heaven's best blessings on thy head ! Be sure your soul is re-  
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plete with dignity, and will assist afflicted Innocence : then shield and save me from the view of your Prince. There is one who will feel for my captivity, as the lioness does the loss of her young, when violently torn from her embrace. To him restore me, my generous deliverer ! and if he thanks thee not, may we be again separated by vast tracts of land and sea.—As my servant had followed at a distance, I dispatched him to the camp for aid. The reins of the chariot were instantly repaired ; and I ordered the wounded victim to be put in a place of safety, till I heard from the Prince the truth of the whole. I put the lady beside me in the chariot ; who, as we drove on, gave me her history in these terms.

My father, you know, is one of the chief Lords of court. He has a villa in this neighbourhood, to which I accompanied him some months ago. On our return home, he heard the proclamation of war ; and being to join the army, hired lodgings for me at a little distance, till he saw the issue of the battle. I was betrothed to Rutha, whose merit Fame has loudly sounded ; and, but for this little excursion, we had been inseparably united. His valour likewise brought him to the field ; nor will it seem strange to a soul like yours, that he often visited my retreat.

Often, whilst he left me, I spied a man whose appearance was doubtful ; but was too happy to think any evil near me. Last night, as the Lord  
Rutha

Rutha left me, I followed him with my eyes, till I lost him in air; and straying insensibly out of my path, was suddenly seized by a man, who, ere I was aware, forced me into this chariot. As I reproached him for depriving me of my liberty, he replied, I was going to the Prince, who would make me the envy of every maid; and whose love would soon reconcile me to my fate. I wept! — I tore my hair! — but in vain! — His marble heart, obdurate in evil, mocked at my wo! — till Heaven sent you to my relief. Blessed be thy valorous arm, O youth! May victory ever sit triumphant on your sword! and may the sweetest voice of Fame give your noble actions immortal renown!

This tale was wrapt up in darkness. I knew my Prince could never authorise a deed so vile; and when I recounted to him the truth, astonishment struck him dumb. He confessed Avignor had told him of a maid who had consented to the scheme of being carried away: but when he heard her quality, and to whom she was betrothed, he blushed to think such an outrage bore the sanction of his name. I soon appeased the tumult in his breast; and by my address prevailed on Rutha to draw a veil over the affront, lest it had reached the King's ear: for such was his virtue, that not the Prince's merit could have prevented his disgrace.

What grateful motions, O Rutha! arose in thy heart

heart, when I delivered the fair Ermina in safety to thy arms ! Whilst the dread of what she had well nigh endured made her over-rate my valour, as she dwelt on the horrid tale, her beautiful face, like Aurora blushing in the east, was covered with a crimson veil.

The wounded Avignor was carefully attended. Agendemon despised his corrupt soul ; but his taste for pleasure made him countenance a wretch whose vileness could stoop to any means for promoting it. Fatal weakness in man ! but in the heart of a prince, a malignant stream, whose infected current overflows every virtuous plant, and chokes the noble growth.

We returned to court ; where his Majesty gave me a reception beyond my deserts, and raised me in honours above my years. But though the path of Honour is alluring, it is beset with snares. Envy raised her wrinkled visage, and scowling viewed my rising fame. Though the sphere I then moved in was too glorious for their malice to reach, all seemed solicitous to court my attention ; whilst my interest raised many to honour, and posts of renown.

Elpenor, a young lord of a pleasing aspect and mild address, was led by Ambition to seek my friendship. So well he imitated Truth's fair form, that his specious manner quickly won my heart, and I poured its inmost recesses into his  
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breast. I spoke to the King in his favour, and my word advanced him to honour and fame.

The rising prospects of the youth shed a joy over my soul, as the husbandman surveys the earth with delight when fruitful Ceres strows her gifts in its lap. He anticipates Autumn's plenteous crop, and views his barns richly crowned. O Emperor! how are the bands of amity and truth weakened by thy deceit! Who shall trust appearing excellence, or depend on Friendship's noblest boast, lest the fair semblance conceal treason, and lurking Falsehood emerge from under the sacred veil? But from its assumed votaries the sharp wind of Adversity blows the mask away whilst those that are real, link more firm, and bid defiance to its rude blasts. Little did I then think, O most worthy Hermit, that I was cherishing a viper in my bosom, whose envenomed bite had well nigh torn my heart. He concealed inclinations from my knowledge, which he knew my principles would condemn: for so forcible were the precepts of my youth, that they influenced every action of my life; and so strict was the virtue of the King, that open Vice showed not its head at court: with him the road to preferment led through the pure vale of Truth and Honour. Such salutary rules produced the noblest effects in the courtiers either were, or seemed to be, ruled by Virtue.

The King admitted me to the secret council

and often asked my opinion on matters of state. At first I blushed to decide on such intricate topics; but finding him resolved to sound my depth, I carefully studied every event, till I clearly beheld the springs by which each political engine was modelled. The faculties of the mind are strengthened by exertion; as Heaven's refreshing dew makes herbs and flowers bloom fresh and gay. Such exercises roused my mind from inaction, and made contemplation my delight. I drank deep of Helicon's exhilarating stream, till I became enamoured of the Muses; and they repaid my toil, by shedding a serene light over my soul. They displayed Religion and Virtue in the most captivating dress to my view. Their influence polished my deeper studies, and softened the severity of abstruse science. Blessed is the youth who early thirsts after Philosophy and Virtue. They seat him on a pleasing eminence; where he breathes the air of Liberty, and rises superior to Pleasure's enervating tie. The loud roar of Passion is hushed to peace by Reason's powerful penetrating ray. Improper ideas once opposed render their influence weak; and perseverance makes the conquest sure. Though the lot of humanity precludes perfection, by daring to conquer it is wonderful how great man can be.

Elpenor and I were often at hunting-parties together. We chased the wild goat over rocks and mountains; whilst Health, like a ruddy nymph, touched our nerves with her grateful vi-

gour. One day, as I pursued the deer with impetuous swiftness, my horse was uncurbed and fierce, and ere I was aware threw me to the ground ; which dislocated my shoulder. Stunned with the fall, I lay speechless ; but recovering, found myself in a litter ; Elpenor at my side, with looks of the most eager inquiry after my situation. I was conveyed to a sweet retreat, which chanced to belong to Elpenor, whose sister at that time was passing away the summer-months in that charming abode, full of woods, groves, and interspersed water, with every beauty fit to inspire rural tranquillity.

Able physicians were instantly called ; who set my arm, though not without immense pain ; and next day I fell into a fever, which threatened my life. The whole court was alarmed, as the King himself seemed so sensible of the blow ; and came in person, with my father, to console me in my distress. In time my youth and strength subdued the fever's rage. I grew quiet, and out of danger. Elpenor never quitted my bed ; and his sister, beautiful as the rosy Morn, presented my medicines with a sweet sollicitude ; which, when I became sensible of my state, produced powerful effects on my heart.

Elpenor observed them with joy ; and when I grew a little better, on pretence of important business, left me whole days alone with my fair physician.

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She read to me at times with the most graceful accent; and with hands of snow touched the harp in notes so sweet as quickly melted my soul. The infection stole unperceived; I was lost ere I was aware.

Then in vain did Philosophy, and a love of science, which I thought would have guarded my heart from female charms, now aid me! Those elevated views fell before the soft seducer, upon whose smile my whole happiness now depended. Vain confidence! arrogant ideas! why do you dwell in the heart of man? Were he conscious of his frame, Humility would erect her throne in his breast; and, by her precaution, guard him from those snares which often trap the self-secure.

I disclosed my sentiments to Elpenor; who declared, his happiness would be complete to claim me by so dear a tie. I likewise told the soft tale to the fair Vanessa; who modestly referred me to her brother. But the sweet language of love sat in the humid beam of her eye, and spoke unutterable things. Fired with the soft impression, I hastened to court, to procure consent to have our union completed. His Majesty embraced me with affection, and thanked Heaven for my recovery. As soon as I was alone with my father, I threw myself at his feet, and avowed my passion in such a warm manner, as struck him dumb. He turned his face from my presence, and heaved a deep sigh;



figh;—walked a long while in a thoughtful silence, which I durst not interrupt;—at last, My son, said he, resist this growing passion, as I foresee it must stop your rising fame. Let a few years roll over your head, ere you fix in life. Great are thine endowments, O my son; cultivate them for the good of others; for the King's sake, who feels joy in your mental powers, and wishes to spread their influence over the realm.—I bathed his hand with my tears; but lost the power of utterance; and ere I could reply, the King entered the room, and suprised us in this unutterable scene. Amazement, grief, and confusion, alternately stopped every tongue. His Majesty looked wishfully upon us; and thus began.

Tell me, Otho, what means your tearful eye? is it thus you welcome your son from Death's awful jaw? Gracious Sovereign! he replied, Heaven be praised for my son's life. At present I tremble for the death of his fame. Then he recounted all I have told you to the King; who shrugged up his shoulders, threw himself in a chair, and stared at me in silence. As one who has ignorantly hugged a serpent to his breast, discovering the dangerous inmate, starts with horror from the envenomed bite, I roused from my soft enchantment, and threw myself at his feet.

Pardon, most revered Majesty, and you, my excellent parent, pardon a wretch, whose folly has offended



offended. Behold me, at your feet, willing to submit to Wisdom's sacred rule.

Arise, Otho, said the King : I know your conquest is complete, if you attempt the cure. You are already far advanced up the hill of Excellence ; nor must the Syren voice of Passion stop the glorious march. I have other purposes to employ your thoughts, that your present scheme would entirely frustrate. Go and recover ; I leave you to yourself. Remember, I think nothing too difficult for an Otho to surmount. — So saying, he led my father away, and left me in a state past description ; Love and Reason, like two enraged warriors, battling in my soul. — How shall I give you an adequate idea of what passed within my heart ? On the one side, the beautiful Vanessa rushed on my thoughts, with the mildest attention in her looks, whilst she tended my distress with the ardour of affection ; her fair eyes suffused with tears, wishing to tear my faithless image from her heart. On the other hand, the King and my father disapproving of my choice, mildly intreating me to delay. The King's confidence in my fortitude and victory over myself, produced amazing effects. But the conflict was too severe for my weakness. Again I fell into the fever's rage ; and again the whole court was alarmed for my life.

The King sent for Elpenor : severely chid him for giving sanction to our affection without his approbation.

probation. Otho is too young, said he, to fix in life. His talents so eminently great, I mean to avail myself of his endowments. I design to send him for some time to Hygeiapolis; there to form a seminary of the learned, where philosophers and poets shall shine. As the bright beams of heaven enliven the beauties of the field, so doth instruction's animating power new-mould the soul of man.

Let the fair Vanessa know, that Otho, for reasons of state, must leave the court, and merit Fame by cultivating his mental powers. Retire, likewise, with your sister for a season; nor offer to bid him adieu; lest you tear those wounds, that are still bleeding, and which Time's lenient hand alone can heal.

Elpenor durst not disobey; so he quitted the King's presence with a bow of assent; but the rage that glowed in his breast, like fire shut up in the bowels of the earth, waited only a fit opportunity to burst into flame.

Envy, baleful passion! took place in his heart. The unmerited praises his Majesty honoured me with, unknown to himself, cooled his affection, and made him view me with a jealous eye; whilst I, alas! lay the victim of contending passions,—my heart like the raging ocean, when its stormy billows threaten the seamen with death.

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When I recovered, the King convened his wisest statesmen; and thus spoke from the throne.

With pain I perceive ignorance and barbarism triumph over my subjects, and obscure their intellectual eye, like a region where mist and fog cloud the air. To cure this, we intend to erect a large seminary of learning in Hygeiapolis, where knowledge shall banish that darkness, and science dawn on the young mind.

You, Otho, I design shall superintend that society. Your progress in literature marks you out for that important task. We shall collect a number of sages, and fix each in his proper line. Some to Natural Philosophy, in displaying the minutest objects of the universe with force and beauty. To others the course of the stars shall be assigned, the harmony of the heavenly orbs. But the result of these discoveries must point out to youth the knowledge of God, his omnipotence and wisdom; that all learning is useless, except it elevate the soul, and draw it toward the original fountain of truth and purity.

The assembly applauded the King's philanthropy in an eloquent address. I set out with general approbation; and, in a few months, matters were settled to his Majesty's pleasure. The flower of the youth flocked thither; where their progress in learning rewarded the noble motive of the generous donor.

Oh, glorious period! early dawn of my life with what delight do I recal those blessed moments when, divested of every trifling care, I roved through the fields of Science; my mind enamoured with the love of truth, I tasted pleasures next to divine. But human excellence is insecure: now it soars like an eagle on a rock; anon it crawls with the insect on the ground.

Some years rolled away in these pleasant exercises. I strove to banish Love, and thought I had triumphed over his power; when an unforeseen event showed my weakness and mistake.

A charming river ran by the college, and stole along the plain in sweet meanders; woods and rocks on both sides invited us to bathe in the pure fountain. One day I went beyond my depth; and being seized with the cramp, sunk to the bottom where I must have perished had not unexpected aid been sent from Heaven.

I am ignorant how I was taken out of the water; but, on recovering, found myself supported by a man and a woman; whom heedfully viewing I knew were Elpenor and Vanessa. Surprise had well nigh deprived me of motion! the scene was silent and emphatic.

Seizing one of her hands, I cried, O Vanessa injured excellence, am I once more indebted to you for a life which the severity of my fate must have made you despise? O Elpenor! O my friend

friend! explain these mysteries. Why did you not leave me in the waters to revenge the woes I have occasioned you?

Thus to behold you, Otho, charms away my rage; though I had viewed you as a false friend, who aided my disgrace. For loud thunder to the frightened shepherd on the mountains, sounds not so dreadful as the King's voice in my ear, pronouncing my banishment.

I carried my sister to a seat we possess in Rura, hating to return to court, where memory must have recalled painful scenes. Last week we came to a pleasant hermitage in this wilderness. And this day, roving through the woods, have been fortunate enough to save your life. We embraced each other: I wept aloud; for joy, carried to a certain excess, produces all the tumult of poignant woe.

The cold moralist may condemn my conduct; but the soul of sensibility will easily figure my passion glowed with more warmth than ever. I was resolved to espouse Vanessa. But lest the King had again interposed, I married her without delay; then dispatched a message to court with the best apology I could devise.

When the fair morning, whose lustre invited the shepherd to the mountains, is suddenly overcast, he flies disappointed to the vales; so the



mind recoils displeased when the hero of its elevated expectation fails. When my letters arrive at court, my father stands like a mariner who had carefully brought his ship to land, and ere he is aware sees her driven amongst the rocks. He loses his usual composure, rages aloud, and threatens me with disgrace. But the King, feeling the force of his first impression, pities me; orders me to quit the college, and retire to a seat of my father's, remote from the court. I carried Vanessa to that sweet retreat, and found consolation in her society for my disgrace. But two years elapsed, and no notice sent me, I grew unhappy. Impatient to obtain the King's pardon, and my father's blessing, I went to court; and hearing they were both together, I burst into the apartment, and threw myself at the King's feet, but could not utter a single word. Astonishment kept them silent. Shame and confusion stopt my tongue. But pity, that godlike quality, strongly mingled in the King's soul, overcame his anger; and, showing the excellence of his nature, he addressed me in these terms.

Arise, Otho! you have convinced us, that perfection is not the lot of humanity; that Passion is a bad conductor, to whose Syren voice you have too much listened: but your mortified mien shows you are a sufferer; nor must we fix any deeper your self-accusing stings. Here, Otho, receive your son. If Heaven receive returning penitents, shall we, liable to human failings, be more severe?

No

No ! let us rather try to revive those sparks that  
 erewhile blazed so bright ; nor quench at once so  
 noble a flame !

This was too much. — My heart, prepared to  
 have resisted reproaches, was softened by good-  
 ness so sublime. I moistened the ground with my  
 tears. My father raised me up, desired me to re-  
 sume myself ; though my disobedience had given  
 him pain, he then wished to blot it for ever from  
 his view.

In fine, O Hermit ! I was taken into favour,  
 and occupied one of the highest offices in the king-  
 dom. Years flew rapidly away. I was blest with  
 a numerous offspring. But Vanessa's frame weak-  
 ened by degrees. The cold hand of Death  
 snatched her away to the tomb. Elpenor began  
 to correct and find fault with most parts of my  
 conduct ; I found his aim was to be sole governor  
 of my affairs.

My temper was unsuspicious ; a specious man-  
 ner never failed to produce good-will : but I have  
 smarted for this weakness in my traffic with men.  
 Though the sentiment takes its rise from good-  
 ness, the error is simplicity, and borders upon  
 vice.

At this period the kingdom received an irrepa-  
 rable blow. Heaven called away the good King  
 to

to never-ending felicity. When he found his end approaching, he thus spoke to my father.

I am going, Otho, to bid adieu to mortal things; to quit an earthly for a heavenly crown; to appear where kings are judged by their worth, and not by the eclat of their birth. The impartial inspector of kings and kingdoms is not biased by external show. A power superior whispers all my toil is past, and bliss eternal waits me after death. Agendemon will ascend the throne, and rule over this people, whom with a parent's fondness I have loved. I dread lest the latent errors of his heart burst through all restraint, and fully the grandeur of his reign. But let thy sage experience, Otho, rectify his failings. Teach him a king is not born for himself, but for his people; that one day, like me, he will be called hence to render up an account of the important charge — Farewell, Otho; our parting will be temporary; in the abode of the just our friendship will begin anew.

Upon his death the court went into deep mourning; the tears they shed gave unfeigned testimony it was more than show. My father was overwhelmed with affliction: but his virtue came to his aid; he thought on the King's blessed change and resigned himself to the will of Heaven.

Agendemon was crowned with great pomp, and seemed solicitous to imitate so rare a pattern.

Many

Many popular actions gained him general love. His majestic deportment, and fine address, excited in every heart a glow of veneration. He paid my father every possible respect, adhering to his precepts like oracles of truth. But in two years after my father resigned all his offices, though the King most earnestly intreated him to stay.

Life, O King! said my father, is a stage; and happy they who, having finished their parts, can look back on a well-spent existence. I review my public actings in the state without a blush, and must now examine if my private life will stand the trial of Conscience.

Soon after this I was ordered to attend him. My son, said he, your temper suits not the guile of a court: Envy will raise her wrinkled head against you, and blast your fame. This king is an imperfect copy of his father: his virtues are so mingled with opposite qualities, that Corruption will gain ground, and Honesty, like a plain garment, be kicked away. But Virtue is a robe that will shine like the sun; it will shield you in the day of adversity, and make you resist its sharp edge. Something persuades me I shall soon lay all frailty aside, and join the blest society above; shall be united to Angelina in a more sublime union than below. A love refined as ours is immortal: She was my first and only passion; no other flame ever warmed my breast. Farewell, my dear son; act always as you would wish to do when

when Life's voyage is past, and you ready to fly away to other climes.

Soon after this he left the world. I buried him, O Hermit ! in my mother's tomb, and bedewed his urn with many tears.

The King expressed deep sorrow at the event, and solemnized it with all the pomp of woe. I enjoyed his confidence and affection, and possessed the art of soothing his passions into peace. His manner was graceful and debonair. I loved him, and my services were the result of affection ; but I could not flatter ; and in some points my morals were too severe. He loved pleasure, from whose fatal source Levity reared its head where before it would have been chased away.

I beheld with grief the mortifying change, but had not power to oppose the growing mischief. I possessed a lucrative post at a distance : the government of Carria was in my hands. One night travelling through a wood, a faint moan approached mine ear. I followed the sound, and beheld a good-looking old man, whose horse had thrown him, and he was sore bruised by the fall. — I raised him up, and assisted him to walk — Son, said he, thou art sent of Heaven to my relief. I live in this vale, retired alike from noise and show. Long did my ancestors flourish at court ; and Fortune poured her largest gifts in their lap. But as yon rapid river quickly bears to some far distant

current



current its proud stream, so did fatal Chance, on fluctuating wing, turn aside their prosperous tide, and made it in another channel flow.

I led him to a pleasing dwelling. We were met at the door by a nymph sweeter than the rosy Morning when the sun salutes the world. She had trembled for the safety of her sire ; and the sight of him gave her a transport of joy. I gazed in silence. Her youth, peerless beauty, and modest mien, again fixed love in my heart : for, O Hermit ! it was Sabina, whose father had reared this fair plant in the desert, which might have graced a throne.

On my return I married Sabina, and carried her to Carria ; whose sweet society ever since has blessed my soul, and alleviated Fortune's bitterest stings.

But who can describe Elpenor's rage, or tell the madness that boiled in his heart ? As the hurricane sounds harsh in a barren wood, so did his ungoverned rage touch mine ear. As I loved him with unfeigned affection, I tried to convince him of his error, and reconcile him to a step so just ; but, availing himself of my easy temper, he dared to make proposals I yet blush to name. He desired me to make a total renunciation of my fortune in favour of Vanessa's children, so secure as no after deed could ever reverse it. Such indignity roused my resentment. I treated his base

G

schemes

schemes with the contempt they deserved. We had a final breach, and saw each other no more.

Then, O Hermit! his enmity blazed forth. He left no ill office untried to complete my ruin: he sowed dissension amongst my children; poisoned their infant minds against the author of their being. Oh! Nature, thy rights were invaded. — I was arraigned at their bar; my actions made criminal; and baleful passions usurped the place of natural affection and filial regard! There he gave me a mortal blow. — I loved my children, and he, by the venomous breath of Malice, deprived me of their affection. But chiefly Phileas, whose soul was filled with matchless worth. He tore him from my tuition, and assumed his name to actions which have since filled the young with remorse, and estranged him from my heart.

Mean time Sabina produced me a numerous race: fair to the eye, and sweet their social converse to the soul. — The poor were daily fed at my gate. Heaven increased my ability to supply their wants; nor was mine ear ever shut to their moan; whilst my credit with the King was great, it frightened my foes from their guile.

Avignor secretly plotted my ruin; reported, that I neglected the affairs of Carria, and laid up stores of the public money for my own use. Those slanderous reports the King told me at meeting, and we always parted friends. But repeated his

produced

produced Suspicion, malignant weed ! whose poison operating on the soul, infused dark thoughts, which, through time, eclipsed my best deeds ; and as the fraudulent serpent, by his guile, drove from the gates of bliss the first sad pair, so did these empty scoffers idle breath, whose rancour first was listened to with scorn, at last, by repetition, fix my doom.

Rutha told me I had foes ere I believed they existed. Conscious of heaping favours on their heads, I almost doubted my friend ; whilst they approached me with the most soothing smiles, and whispered the tales of adulation in mine ear.

O Truth ! thou emblem of heaven, where does thy angel-form reside ? I vainly thought to find her amongst men, but only grasped an illusive shade.

I requested his Majesty to let me retire, to enjoy domestic peace, and shun the machinations of my enemies. He consented with reluctance, but was deaf to the motion of my resigning my offices.—Otho, said he, I love your converse ; it subverts my mind from the toils of empire, and gives my spirits a divine flow. Your enemies whisper tales in mine ear ; but your presence dispels the falsehood, as light makes the shadows fly. Though the smooth words of a courtier drop not from your lips, nor the smile of applause sparkle always in your eye, nothing gives my heart

such unmixed joy as one look of approbation from Otho.

I had bid my best friends adieu, and going through the streets to mount my horse, I was seized by the officer of justice, who showed me the King's order to conduct me to prison. Amazement suppressed my speech: without resistance I resigned to my fate. But the lightning's flash is not more quick than the news spread from place to place that Otho was in disgrace, banished from the King's presence, and thrown into prison. My enemies exulted at an event beyond their malice's reach; whilst my friends were confounded, and scarce could credit the report.

Unable to penetrate the cause of my confinement, I remained some time in anxious suspense. When Night spread her mantle over the earth, Rutha entered the prison, uttering, at once, Otho, you are free; leave these mansions, unworthy of such a guest. — Tell me, friend, said I, how came I here? or why am I deprived of liberty?

When you was seized, said he, I was in the country. But Ermina, hearing such confused reports, was inconsolable; and, heedless of the storm she was taking, flew to the palace, and threw herself at the King's feet. Pardon my boldness, she said. O sacred Majesty! but dare I believe, that Otho has incurred your wrath, and, like a guilty felon, thrown

thrown into a dungeon ; he whose loyalty to you  
is a proverb at court ?

The King raised her up, avowing his ignorance  
of the cause ; but sent for the officer of the law,  
and sternly asked, if Otho was in prison ? He  
replied, That Elpenor had a suit against him, at  
the instance of his own son ; and having gone  
through the usual forms of the law, had issued  
an order, in the King's name, to seize his person.

Go, said the King, and give him liberty. Where  
is that bold man that in my court dares confine  
Otho ? Tell Elpenor, for this outrage he must  
retire to his own land. Never again shall my cup  
of joy sparkle in his hand. For a soul so inhu-  
manly fierce might infect my courtiers, and put a  
sword in the hand of the son to pierce the heart of  
his fire.

Ermina flew home, and finding me arrived,  
relates her story. I quickly issued on Impatience's  
wing, and have procured your freedom.

O Elpenor ! cruel was thy revenge, to ruin  
my credit without a cause. Since I left the court  
at that period, many who never knew the truth,  
imagined me at variance with the King ; and,  
like insects, though diminutive, can buz, and dark-  
en the air. From that belief many have attempt-  
ed to hasten my fall.



I retired to Carria ; but was often obliged, at his own particular desire, to attend the King ; and once, going to court, the Night, with her sable wing, involved me in darkness. The moon, wading through the clouds of heaven, gave a faint ray. My servant had got before me some paces ; when, rushing from a thicket, a youth presented a pistol to my breast. An eager wildness seemed to guide him ; of which I availed myself, and wrenched the pistol from his hand, and struck him to the ground. The moon, emerging from her dark cloud, displayed a light which disarmed all my rage. O Hermit ! a tear of sensibility stole down a face where ingenuous modesty was visibly painted. He arose, and threw himself at my feet. Pardon a wretch, said he, most noble Otho, whom the stern hand of Necessity has plunged in woe. Death is the friend of the miserable, whose stroke I would gladly invoke, did not the life of others hang on this woful victim of misfortune. This is my first, shall be my last crime. The hand of Heaven — and he burst into tears. — I wept likewise. — A conduct so unlike his fault, raised the tenderest pity in my breast.

Ill-fated youth, said I ! what dismal plight hath urged you to this bold deed ? Was the ear of Humanity shut on your woe ? or did soft Pity, with her angel mien, withdraw from your wretched view ? Here, take this purse ; and, as you know my name, apply to me ere necessity again  
urges

urge you to risk your fame, by the paths of Vice,  
which soon or late must plunge in ruin.

The mingled passions which agitated his soul were visible on his brow. He smote his breast, crying, Noblest of men, thou hast — thou hast favoured — Again tears suppressed his voice. O let me disclose, — let me tell all to my gracious benefactor. No, hapless youth! I replied, discover nothing; but cautious shun the paths where misery lurks, where guilty wretches shun the glare of day. Should Poverty, with disregarded mien, force you through wintry winds to ask from Hospitality's kind hand the means of life, it cannot be reproach; 'tis Vice, the monster Vice, that leads to shame and wo.

I rode away, and heard him invoke all the powers of Heaven to bless me.

At this Sabina joined them. They accosted her with the salutations of the morning. The Hermit led them to his bower, and refreshed them with a frugal meal.

## CHAP.

## C H A P. III.

**A** Wake, O lyre ! resound the praises of Humanity. Blessed is the man who compassionates the woes the hand of Heaven prevents him from feeling ; though elevated by sacred virtue deigns to pity, and stretches out the arm of mercy to hapless mortals. His complaint shall be heard on high ; nor shall Adversity's sharp winds touch his head : for by integrity he shall wax strong and smile amidst the storm. Rise, celestial Pity ! let thy placid form soften the dreadfully severe.

## HERMIT.

Resume, most noble Otho ! resume your interesting tale ; whilst the mind is roused with attention, and the pleased ear, as with the strains of music, charmed with the sound.

## OTHO.

How shall I engage in the mazes of guile, or draw the plots of the wicked to view, as one shipwrecked, and dashed on rocks by tempestuous winds, shrinks to review the dreadful havock. For as the blast of Autumn strips the groves of their pride and bloom, so Adversity's rude hand has laid my glory low.

From the refuse of the people Gusto arose :

man intriguing, artful, and wild. By soothing the weak side of the King, he mounted the pinnacle of Fortune's wheel. A seeming zeal for the interest of the King acquired him absolute dominion, till at last, by his favour, he could exalt, and with the same means totally destroy.

I was his only rival in the King's affection; but when I went to court, the smooth smiles of Deceit disguised the spite of his soul. Applause dwelt on his lips when he mentioned me to the King. This his jealousy prompted him to do, that my ruin might be more secure when matters were ripe for his purpose.

The King settled a company on the frontiers of his kingdom, whose extensive commerce reached to distant lands. They wanted a large sum; and one of the chief Lords at court and I were named for their securities. Gusto arrived at Carria with a bond, which I signed at the King's desire: in case of failure, I was to have redress on the crown. This Rinaldo secured, by instantly getting a seal under the King's hand. But I, confiding in his honour, delayed till I went to court. Unluckily months rolling away ere I could go, the company's affairs in the mean time gave way, and we were charged with the sum. Rinaldo's part was paid by the King. Being at a distance, I was neglected. Nor could I urge any thing but the word of a King, which I thought sacred as the laws of heaven. But, alas! I found it like the

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trackless

trackless path of a bird in the air, which leaves no trace behind.

Then did the scouts of the law swarm around my gate, like harpies snuffing for prey. I skulked like a midnight-felon; driven from my own house — my affairs, — my family left a prey to woe. O Hermit! what phrase shall I borrow to paint the labyrinth of ruin those transactions plunged me into! Desolation showed her grim aspect; Disorder, in a tattered robe, took hold of every thing.

Nor can I rehearse the varied scenes I met with in disguise. How the kindness of simple Nature often soothed, — whilst the savage rudeness of others wantonly sported with heart-felt woe.

One day, tired with fatigue, and torn with anguish, I fled to a wood, and sheltered myself from its gloom. The calls of hunger damped my spirits; I threw myself on the grass in despair.

I had almost fainted away; when, through the thicket, I spied a youth with a spade in his hand, the emblem of his office. He bowed to the earth, and, with the most soothing intreaty, begged I would taste of his bread, and drink of his wine; and as one bewildered in darkness exults at a ray of light; so did I brighten at the means of life, and blest the generous youth.



Most noble Otho, he said, time is too precious for words: quick exchange garments with me, and fly away:—your enemies surround this wood, which makes your retreat impossible. —Go, injured excellence! and may your safety be the care of Heaven.

His eagerness made me fly. I passed through a host of my foes, with the spade in my hand, humming a tune of indifference, the better to conceal a heart of care; whilst in the features of my deliverer I recognised my old assassin; and wept for joy, that Gratitude still dwelt in the heart of man.

Not being far from court, I got there unsuspected; and entering into the room where his Majesty sat, he gazed at my seeming boldness;—till knowing me at once, he burst into a loud laugh at my uncouth figure. Your sufferings, Otho, said he, are at an end. We have discovered fraud in the Company's affairs; and Rinaldo has commenced a suit for the recovery of his sum. I joined with him, and was restored to liberty.

I employed a counsellor, named Ullin, whose ambition and talents lay dormant by neglect, as herbs lacking moisture quickly die. I drew him from obscurity, and was the means of pushing him into Fame. But who can relate the mazes of the law? stuffed with doubts and perplexing quibbles, delays and uncertainty spun it out;

whilst my fortune, like the dripping fount, gradually wasted away.

One of the principal debtors, who was ordered by the court to appear, and give his oath ere further proceedings could take place, went abroad. But Death called him away to answer at another bar; and for years the cause slept in peace. Rutha often urged me to get security from the King, in case of the worst. But I, confiding in his justice and truth, slighted the means of relief.

Meanwhile my children grew apace. Alonzo was like a towering oak that lifts his head above the trees of the wood. His soul was brave, aspiring to lofty deeds. The King loved him; and being obliged to assist a neighbouring prince, sent him abroad with a high command. Esteem and love followed his steps, and paved the way to fame.

Avignor rose by degrees. His little soul could not brook being baffled by my hand: his plotting heart, like the mole under ground, thrived up mire and dirt: he became a tool in the hands of my foes, to forward schemes they durst not authorise. Thus did Malice join against me. Envy rose on sooty pinions, and sealed my doom.

As the King grew in years, Avarice took place

in his heart, and Credulity fastened on his ear. Avignor's reports of my misconduct, repeatedly uttered, Gusto, with seeming sorrow, doubted were but too true; regretted my simplicity, but zeal for the public good made him overlook every private tie.

Thus are kings abused by designing men, and innocence clouded by Rancour's spite: for who can trace Dissimulation through its maze, or strip the disguise from lurking Guile? None but he who formed the heart: that province belongs not to man.

My house was the resort of the learned; and when Fortune frowned on their birth, my word often pushed them into fame.—I loved their society; and the hours spent in their discourse, used to glide away on fleeting wings.

Leonardo, a youth designed for the church, courted my favour. He seemed acute, mild, and ingenuous; but truth dwelt not in his heart. I wrote in his praise to the King, and sent him to court; that by raising him in life I might draw concealed merit to view. But, ah! the latent sparks did quickly blaze, and black Deceit sprung up in the heart designed to hymn forth the praises of the Most High.

He practised with Gusto for my government; and ere I was aware procured it for his friend:

as

as one awaked from a pleasing dream by an earthquake's dreadful blow,—so astonished did I feel the insult,—and flew to court to hear from the King what I had done to merit this his scorn. But as the loud wind tears up trees, and scatters the glory of the plain; so passion deformed his wonted regard. He accused me of many crimes in a violent tone.

Gusto appeared calm; but told me what complaints had filled the King's ear. I shewed him a clause, which put it out of the King's power to deprive me of it during life. He said, he wished I would not resist, but silently resign.

Indignation filled my heart. I left the palace in a rage. An able counsellor took my cause in hand, and promised me success with the King. But feeble is the justice of a suit opposed to royal power. Though injured, though abused, without a cause, the sequel will evince this step was wrong.

To this well-tried veteran of the law I trusted my affairs, and went to give Sabina an account of the whole; when Heaven again interposed, and baffled the rage of my foes. Four armed men in masks attacked us. I received a slight wound; my servant fell from his horse; destruction hovered over our heads; when two horsemen came up and taking our side, put our enemies to flight. The castle of our generous deliverer was at hand. He sent for a chariot, and drove us to his seat.

our wounds were dressed ; and a short time completed our cure. Having learned my name, he one day thus accosted me.

Most noble Otho ! blessed be the powers above who have aided my feeble arm to save your life ! To our late Sovereign, and your worthy father, I owe these ample domains. When they traversed the kingdom to search out Truth, one night they halted in a grove. The moon sunk beneath a cloud ; the wind blew rough through the trees ; a voice approaching their ear from a shade, they listened, and distinctly heard these sounds.

The noise of busy men is hushed in sleep : the stars of heaven are hid by darkness : the blustering wind through the leafless wood invades mine ear with a solemn sound. Alas ! no friend is near to chase Despair away. Whither shall I fly ? O, sable Night ! to thee I lift my voice of wo ! my plaintive sounds shall pierce the vast bosom of the sky.

They followed the voice, and beheld a youth, like a flower trod by the foot of a clown, his eyes, two crystal streams, impearling the grafs with tears. Upon hearing his tale, they found him the victim of despairing love, by avarice inhuman plunged in wo.

Trinkello, a chief lord at court, had a daughter of peerless worth. Long did he love, and at last gained



gained her heart. Sanctified by paternal sanction, she avowed with joy the concealed flame: But as dark clouds foretell a storm, her father's changed aspect kindled fear.

The greatest lord in Ludovico's court demanded fair Elvira for his bride. Nor could his virtue stand the alluring bait, in spite of all her tears and sad despair.

He forbade his house to the youth; but offered to raise him in the state. But he, like a wretch who views his happiness vanishing off, despised the gift, beat his breast, and fled to the desert to feed on wo.

The King beheld his youth with pity; and, justly despising the authors of his wo, carried him to court, and lodged him secure.

Next day Trinkello waited on the King to ask his consent to the match. His Majesty was pleased; but offered to be present, as a guest, to see the fair Elvira given away.

The Lord Rinaldo, dressed in gorgeous robes, came joyful to the altar, like a star. His Majesty was seated on a throne; the nobles, in their order, ranged around. At last, with reluctant pace, and tearful eye, Elvira came, like a rose stripped of its bloom. His Majesty beheld her from the throne; and thus began.

Why

Why droops the fair Elvira, clouding the general joy? Like some despairing victim comest thou to Hymen's altar? Dost thou intend to mock those sacred rites, by Heaven designed for mortals purest joy? Unless your heart consents, this union is in vain.

As one from a huge precipice thrown down, catches with eager joy at some small twig to escape the horrid gulph that yawns below; so Hope at once dispelled sad Despair: she humbly threw herself before the throne.

O sacred Majesty, she weeping said, under the influence of thy gentle reign, let not a hapless maid be doomed to woe. To yonder temple let me be conveyed, where consecrated virgins watch the night, where purest orisons arise to Heaven, to beg fresh blessings on your sacred head. And thou, my Lord Rinaldo, knowest well how oft I wept, how oft I begged you to quit your suit when my devoted heart was cold to love.

How comes it, Lord Trinkello, said the King, you drop the father in the tyrant's rage, to force an union Nature disapproves, and blast at once the fairest bud of joy? And canst thou, Lord Rinaldo, wed a maid, and to paternal force owe all your bliss? The bare recital of so foul a deed would sully all the lustre of your fame.

Once, fair Elvira, listen to your King; ere the  
I nobles

nobles depart, and the priest retire, let me offer  
youth to your view, whose presence may dispel  
the gloom, and drive a cloister's recess from your  
mind.

Expectation sat on every brow; whilst guilty  
fear made Trinkello quake. Like a wretch who  
dreads the force of the laws he has broke, he  
trembled his heart when the youth appeared to  
view. The madness of joy so fiercely rushed over  
Elvira, that she fell by the throne, like a lily  
rooted up by a blast; whilst the youth, heedless  
of the gazing croud, the monarch, and noble  
scene, eagerly sprung, and caught her in his arms.

Pleased the King beheld the pair. The charmed  
audience melted at the view; whilst thus he  
spoke from the throne.

Behold, my Lord Trinkello, and admire how  
Heaven has thwarted your unjust designs. Your  
avarice is punished with shame; your promise  
broke; your child, a victim to consuming grief,  
calls out for quick redress. Go, join their hands  
whose hearts are paired above. Nor grieve thou  
Lord Rinaldo; but rejoice, by Fortune's favour-  
ing hand, thou hast escaped guile.

A peal of joy made all the temple ring. With  
unanimity they all combined to bless the justice of  
the gracious King; who gave them to possess  
those lofty towers with dignity and honour at  
cost.

court. But blessed beyond expression with their lot, they shunned the pomp of life. Having no child but me, my improvement engaged their attention, till death snatched them to purer regions, where such ardent affection below must improve for ever with an undecaying flame.

Amused with his artless tale, I staid a week longer in his sweet retreat, and beheld a tomb which filial piety has reared to the dead, on which I read these words.

View this sacred spot, O passenger! whose narrow bounds intombs all that was mortal of two lovers. The pure essence of friendship and love united them below, and beamed forth in a train of virtuous deeds. Mingled in one urn, their ashes rest. From their long trance they shall fly together, when the voice of Power awakes the dead.

Parting with my generous host, I went to Carria. But, Oh Hermit! how shall I paint the horrid scene? My castle all in flames, whose smoke touched the clouds. With a faltering voice I cried, How fares Sabina? are my children safe? But could utter no more, when surrounded by a rude crew, who bound me hand and foot, drove me to prison; where, felon-like, I was thrown into a dungeon; where Melancholy, with her train of phantoms drear, assailed my soul. Cruel Agendemon, I cried, is it thus thou hast

torn happiness from Otho? Where now are all my children and Sabina? Ah me! perhaps they perished in the flames.

The keeper entered the prison, loosed my bonds in silence, then sobbed aloud. Affected by sympathy so unexpected, my heart softened into tears; but shame took place in my heart to have occasioned his grief.

Generous Mortal, said I, thou feelest then for fallen Otho? Let the lofty soul take a glance of this reverse, and learn humility. For the voice of Adulation went before me like a trumpet. The prayer of the poor has been music in my ear — Where now are my flatterers? and where the courtiers smile? All fled as wintry frost disperses the buzzing insect. Say, thou whom pity melts at my fate, say, for what crime I became your guest. Why did devouring fire consume my towers? Oh! has my wife and children — I could utter no more, but sighed.

The stranger raised his head; the tear shone in his eye. Unavailing, said he, are my tears; but my heart bleeds for your woe. Envy and Malice have wrought your fall: you are proclaimed a traitor, and your effects confiscated to the crown. The rude crew set your castle on fire in spite of the zeal of your friends.

Are they then gone? I exclaimed in a transport.



Have devouring flames torn them from my heart ?  
O cruel King ! more fierce than a mountain-ty-  
ger ! Bear me to his presence ; let me upbraid  
him, and die.

They are not dead, replied the keeper ; but  
placed in safety by some of your friends, perhaps  
only mourning your sad fate.

The soul of comfort dwells in your words, thou  
messenger of peace, said I. Since they are safe,  
I smile at contempt. Let the King tyrannize :  
my innocence shall triumph over his rage ; or my  
death for ever fully his renown.

Fear not, said the keeper ; the prayers of those  
thou hast raised from want will fly to Heaven, and  
ward off the blow. — Dost thou remember, Noble  
Otho, as thou returnedst one day from the court,  
the officers of the law surrounded a little house in  
your way. A woman, in tears, threw herself at  
your feet. You listened with patience to her  
plaintive tale. Her husband lay the victim of Dis-  
ease : their substance spent. The creditors severe  
stripped all the house, tore the sick man from  
his bed, and, void of mercy, threw him on the  
ground. Compassion, like an angel, seized your  
soul. You alighted, and surveyed the unfeeling  
crew, discharged all the sum. The creditors a-  
bashed, shrunk from your view : struck with their  
littleness, they slow retired. You gave a purse,  
besides urging the proper tendance of the sick.

If

If there is an object that high Heaven delights in, whom smiling angels tend with kindred joy, it is such a man, who, to the wretch deprived of human comfort, gives relief. — I am that grateful creature, mighty Otho. I am the man your bounty saved from death; fixed, by divine direction, in this spot, to save thee from the fury of your foes.

I traced the former action like a dream which Memory faintly offers to the view; but found such consolation in his kind offices, that my prison grew supportable, and his presence necessary to my peace; when all at once he disappeared, and left me dark, like a traveller in the shade, when the moon at once is veiled from view.

At the dead of night, when the rude wind bore unison with my soul, the door at once burst open, and two men entered the prison. Horror was perched on each brow. One of them held a bowl, the other carried a dagger: A profound silence ensued; they fixed their eyes on the ground. — Come on, said I, ye ministers of Fate! Come and execute your King's will! Tell him, Otho, who smiled at death in the rage of battle, when glory lightened his path, fears not his grim visage in this gloomy dungeon. The first beckoned his companion, who retired;—and he moved toward me in a slow pace. I snatched the bowl from his hand, crying, Ungrateful King! Thy stern justice has already struck a deeper blow. This

subtle

subtile draught shall cut Life's slender strings,  
 and I shall fly beyond a tyrant's rage. But how  
 shall keen remorse tear up his soul? — He pulled  
 the bowl from my hand, and dashed it on the  
 ground; crying, Drink not, most renowned Otho!  
 Not for worlds would I touch your precious life;—  
 to save thee from death I have assumed a wretch's  
 form, and spoke of Revenge whilst Gratitude  
 glowed in my heart. Once in my garments you  
 fled from your foes,—which again you must at-  
 tempt, as your enemies thirst for your life; and  
 Heaven, whose power surpasses human vigilance,  
 will guard your steps to some place of rest. Time  
 presses quick, lest Suspicion wake, and frustrate all  
 my care.

I expected death; to which, in a gloomy  
 triumph, I had resigned. As he spoke, my soul  
 was suspended betwixt hope and fear, like a sea-  
 man tossed in Ocean's storm, dreading every blast  
 will bury him in the deep. The winds fly to rest  
 in their secret caves; the skies clear; but he  
 doubts the faithless waves, and deems the calm  
 deceit.

He threw himself at my feet, conjuring me, by  
 all the powers of Heaven, to fly away. Blessed  
 mortal! said I, that, like my guardian angel in  
 disguise, thus hovers round to snatch me from  
 despair. Whence art thou? Why is mine ear  
 a stranger to your tale? Your soul, that might  
 adorn the court of kings, is buried by some  
 strange

strange reverse of Fate from public view : such godlike actions raise thee above man, and make superior spirits glow with rapture. Another period shall unveil my fate ; but, Oh ! at present fly ; — each moment you delay ensnares your life.

His eagerness made me fly ; and that love of life so fixed in the human soul, began to revive. Unsuspected I passed through the guards ; but the storm blew loud, and threatened me with ruin. Near my prison was my paternal seat ; which, by the varied disasters of my fate, had become the property of Elpenor. I run for shelter to his house, heedless of ancient enmity. But, O Hermit ! canst thou credit the report ? his domestic insulted and denied me admittance. Alone exposed to danger and death, I knew not where to turn, till Chance, or rather Heaven, conducted me to this wilderness, where I lived two days on what I got from my deliverer. But Despair had formed a gloom over my mind when Rutha appeared, who, like Heaven, gracious agent, has guided my steps to thee.

#### HERMIT.

The events of thy interesting tale evince the fleetingness of human power. Though complicated guile produced your fall, mark the hand of Heaven snatching you from death. When the waves of ruin overflowed your head, and mortal aid seemed lost to your view, some previous

of mercy, registered on high, burst through the gloom, by agency divine, and warded from your head the impending blow.

And now though the gifts of Fortune be denied, and smooth Adulation fly from your ear, more precious is thy soul to thy maker than Eastern treasures, if, with fixed principles, you remain alike under Adversity's sternest frown or Fortune's favouring smiles. To that great eye, whose glance surveys the whole, all earthly grandeur sinks beneath a toy; compared with an upright spotless soul.

OTHO.

Your noble precepts win my soul from wo; forcibly they animate my heart, that as you talk my sadness flies away. But tell me, Rutha, how thou foundst me out; what friendly arm, amidst my total ruin, boldly saved from the flames Sabinna.

RUTHA.

The dark cabal that formed your overthrow was secret, gloomy, watchful, and decisive, awed by the formidable pomp of Royal power. Your lawyer meanly shrunk behind the scenes, without a voice to speak in your behalf. Your crimes were urged with rage. Prepared to fix your doom, your foes proclaimed thee a traitor; and quick the royal mandate was procured, which gave thee to the fury of the law.

K

To



To screen thee from such virulence I flew to Carria. Sabina thought you had been at court, and trembled when she heard you had been absent. I too dreaded some machination of your foes. But no time was to be lost. I made her put up her jewels, and each thing of value; ordered the children to gird up their courage. When Night, in a sable robe, veiled objects in a shade, I carried them to a sweet retreat I had, previous to that period, made a purchase of. I returned to court, where I heard of your confinement; but willing to mitigate the rigour of your doom ere I visited you, I halted some time; when rumour announced you was poisoned. Horror chilled my veins, and deprived me of action. Ermina tore her hair, and wept; she flew to the palace, and fell at the Queen's feet.

Pardon, she cried, O Majesty! this violence of grief; but I weep to see his Majesty abused;—Otho, his faithful subject, treated like a slave;—his house consumed;—his family scattered like sheep on the mountains, whose shepherd is fallen asleep;—himself a prisoner, perhaps no more!—Blest be those tears: your Majesty relents.—O fly, assail the King in his behalf, and give to immortality your fame.

Otho, replied the Queen, found a friend in me; but as a torrent sweeps every obstacle away till it overflows the banks, so Malice has prevailed, and wrought his fall. Let us go to the King; your presence

presence will animate my voice, and give a sanction to the awful truth.

They went to his apartment. His Majesty was thrown on a couch. Disease had enfeebled his strength, and invaded the powers of his mind. The Queen kneeled respectfully at his feet, and kissed the hem of his robe, and begged to be heard in behalf of ruined Otho.

Name him not, cried the King, whilst rage sat visible on his brow. A monster whom I placed in my heart as a jewel of rarest price, loaded him with honours which I thought his due, and viewed him as a treasure. But as a son usurps over an indulgent parent, so has he lifted his heel against his King. He has tried the law, and hath felt its force, and justly is named a hoary traitor.

The Queen was awed into silence. Ermina kneeled, likewise weeping, cried, He is not a traitor, O King! but a faithful subject disgraced. By a track of fraud his foes have prevailed, and your Majesty is abused.

Whence this boldness? said the King, and looked stern. But, heedless of his frowns, she thus exclaimed, If he is a traitor, O King! art thou not appeased? You have taken him off by poison. Poison! repeated the King, amazement on his face. Who dares poison him? Then perhaps he lives, said Ermina. Never shall I rise from

your feet, but bathe them with my tears, till you sign his pardon. Banish him from court, but let him live.

When a father is going to correct a favourite child, the sweet prattler so importunes, his passion flies away. So felt the King, unused to such tender scenes, to abridge its length, he signed your pardon. Ermina cried, in a grateful rapture, May Heaven absolve all your Majesty's faults, and give you endless happiness above.

I posted away to prison, demanding admittance to Otho. In every muscle of the jailor's face fear sat quaking. I rushed into the room, beheld you in appearance dead, covered with your robe. I rent my cloaths with anguish.

How durst you imbrue your hands in his noble blood? I cried in a rage; the worst of torments shall tear your limbs, and make you call in vain for death. Ill-fated Otho, the lowest of the wicked crew hath plotted your ruin. Here, behold the King's pardon; nor knows he of the barbarous deed. I lifted up the cloak; when the strange unknown opened his eyes: nor stands the affrighted traveller more aghast on viewing a horrid serpent in the way, than I, struck dumb with amazement, gazed in silence!

Fear not, said he, thou friend of Otho; Hea

men, whose vigilant providence guards the just,  
has snatched him from death.

Who art thou, I faltering cried, that through  
the gloom of sad Despair speaks forth the words  
of peace?

A man, he replied, who am not what I seem;  
but, owing more than life to generous Otho, with-  
out regret, to save him have risked mine. But,  
ah! whither is the lonely mourner fled! What  
shade conceals him from the barbarous crew?  
That pardon, noble Sir, will ease his fears, and  
let his injured head descend in peace. Then let  
us different paths pursue with speed, lest hunger,  
grief, and cold, the sternest ministers of Death,  
surprise him.

He said, and flew so rapidly away, he left me  
stupid, motionless, and dumb. The trembling  
sailor scarce believed his eyes, but began to trace  
his features in one of the assassins, under whose  
disguise he fancied you had fled. I gave way to  
the chearful truth, and went to give Sabina an  
account of your safety; but entering this wilder-  
ness, I found you, O persecuted Otho, superior  
now to malice, rage, and wrong. The immortal  
powers, whose ways are inscrutable, have given  
you ample subject for endless praise.

HERMIT.

Sure thou hast trod Adversity's stern paths, and  
must

must have drunk at Wisdom's sacred fount, which purifies the intellectual view, and strips from gilded Vice the showy veil, beyond the ken of contentions to descry. Such purity of light would strike them blind, just like the sun in his meridian blaze when we intensely gaze upon his beams.

But the noble strokes which mark the tracks of your deliverer, most forcibly allure the heart to love. Some fatal throws of Fortune's fickle wheel had urged him to the precipice of Vice, from whence your generosity preserved him; yet surely your noble soul peeps through the shade, and makes your King, in splendor on his throne, sink far beneath the glance of Wisdom's eye, opposed to Virtue struggling with distress, battling with woes which wear no common form.

OTHO.

Alas! my prosperous days are fled for ever; else it would expand my soul with joy to raise him to renown. But, ah! I am drove from the haunts of men, with infamy and scorn stamped on my brow, the jest and triumph of my cruel foes.

RUTHA.

Disordered Fancy paints unreal fears, as timorous nymphs, crossing some dreary lawn, falsely behold a thousand spectres rise, and on each credulous vulgar ear, with curious gestures, tell their stupid tale.



Let no such phantoms touch your noble mind;  
 Look forward, and conclude the scene will change.  
 Otho's fall, disgrace, and banishment, rush on  
 my view; whose virtue, long eclipsed, emerged  
 at last, and, like the bright beams of the setting  
 sun, his eve of life with splendor died away.

The Hermit and Otho begged to hear the tale;  
 and Rutha, without hesitation, thus began.

## C H A P.

## C H A P. IV.

**I**N the pathless desert of Erema, where the untrod grass waved, like Ceres's fruitful crop, to the breath of the wind, lived Alronald the Hermit, whose aged locks, and venerable gait, inspired the heart with attention and respect. His mind, which early glowed with a love of truth, was confirmed in every principle by experience and piety.

One evening, under the shade of an aged elm, he sent up praises to the Most High ; who, in the glorious arch of heaven, had so canopied this world as excited in every serious soul admiration and love. In midst of his grateful raptures, his orisons were interrupted by the voice of a maid, faltering with inward wo.

Fly from me, she plaintive said — Fly from me, ye ghosts of bygone joy. Mock not the present horror of my soul with your fleeting forms : for now the correcting hand of Heaven hath blasted those fair blossoms that early flourished, and promised a smiling harvest. Deprived of friends, and torn from all I loved, gloomy is my present view. Boast not of grandeur, ye blooming maids ; but learn humility from my reverse : for lately the wind durst not blow on my head, nor the voice of

Sorrow

Sorrow touch mine ear. Now stript of every comfort, Hope itself is fled : for hunger now will quickly level me with the dust. Eternal King ! support a hapless virgin. Lead me to some life-inspiring plant ; for thou feedest the fowls of heaven, and by thee the wild raven obtains its food.

Compassion seized Alronald's heart. He followed the voice, till he discovered the maid. She beheld his venerable form, and straitway found a mixture of terror, wonder, and joy, seize her breast ; but Hunger's sharp hand fixed her to the ground. She attempted to rise, and supplicate aid ; but fell trembling to the earth.

Dismiss thy terror, thou fair disconsolate, said the Hermit. Heaven sent me here to save your life. In this vast desert no mortal breathes but me : but fear not thou ; thy purity, thy innocence, like guards, defend thee from those ills that plague the world.

His grave aspect banished fear from the maid ; but her tongue refused to obey her grateful soul ; she expressed her confidence in his truth by the mild look of her animated eye.

He carried her to his homely hut ; gave her a cordial to swallow, which recalled her spirits. After eating some food, she retired to rest, and

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he

he to adore his Maker, who had deemed him worthy to perform an act of mercy.

The rays of the sun darting through a chink of the cave, awaked Selima from pure repose. Nature was restored, Joy and Health again sparkled on her brow. She arose, and sought her kind benefactor, and threw herself at his feet, saying, Blessed art thou, O Venerable Mortal ! receiving the humble thanks of a maid, who, without thy aid, must have fallen to the wild beasts of the desert a prey.

Arise, fair maid, said Alronald ; the sweet consolation of saving your life shall gild with joy my solitary hours. But why is your youth exposed to the perils of the wilderness? or why such peerless beauty left alone to woe? Has the angel of Death snatched away your parents ; or, in midst of their glory, laid your kindred low? Let thy story touch the ear of age. The counsels of experience shall cheerfully direct the footsteps of youth, and pour comfort into the heart of Care.

Alas ! said Selima, must I resume the dismal tale, and open afresh my heart to woe? But perhaps thou wilt guide me to the paths of peace, and teach me to endure my hapless lot. Fortune caressed me like a favourite child, till my heart confided in her smooth embrace ; then threw me headlong from her grasp, to scramble in the dark without one ray of hope to light me on my way.

Orchomel

Orchomus, King of Polycarpia, was my father ; and she who is now the outcast of Fortune was sole heir of a potent realm. I was the darling of my aged sire, whilst useful learning conspired to form my youth. The sage philosopher and the historian displayed their instructive page to my view ; that Wisdom might render my people happy, by teaching me to rule mine own heart ; whilst painting and the harp gave the softer graces, and proved at intervals a sweet relaxation from care.

Thus false arose the sun of Life's morn : the people exulted as I passed ; the breath of Adulation saluted me from the croud.

Pleased with my growing talents, the King desired to see a partner to my throne when Heaven should call him away ; and fortunately chose Lamor, a neighbouring prince, whom my heart had in secret long approved. His soul was replete with virtue ; and his form, beautiful as the day, occasioned the involuntary sigh of the maid. But who can ensure future felicity ? or say, To-morrow we shall be blest ? Impending sorrow perched on our heads, and quickly blasted every joy.

Albosirus, a prince of the blood, of violent passions, proud, impatient of controul, was led by ambition to solicit my affection. Having long aspired to mount the throne, he considered my consent as the best means of facilitating his purpose.



But the choice of my heart was fixed on Lamor, and Truth alone rejected his suit. The pride of disappointed hopes ruffled his brow; unlike the grief of ill-fated love. In a haughty tone he demanded me from the King; who told him I was betrothed. Then his rage knew no bounds: his insolence provoked the King, who banished him from court; and pity it was he did not confine him in prison: he retired in a menacing manner, and secretly plotted our ruin.

Malcontents were scattered up and down the kingdom, with whom he secretly practised; told them his right to the crown was prior to my father's; that unless he could show the charter and archives by which he claimed his title, he meant to wrest from him what was so long unjustly detained; well knowing the papers belonging to the crown had for years before been unfortunately lost.

Silence and secrecy aid his designs. The King heard it not till it burst upon his head; like those flattering calms that precede the storm which buries the sailor in the deep.

His Majesty had given orders to solemnize our marriage with great pomp. Every thing was prepared. Lamor and the priest were in the palace, just beginning the sacred rites, when a confused noise drew our attention. Treason! Treason! resounded from the walls. A soldier entered bleeding; told us Albosirus was proclaimed King

by the enraged multitude, who were just about to storm the palace. Hearing of my marriage, they meant to secure me for Albosirus, and put the King and Lamor to death. I tore my hair, and wept, resolved to die ere I fell into their hand.

The shades of night came on. The faithful guards opposed their passage to the palace with undaunted boldness. A trusty subject entered in haste; said, he had found a way for us to escape, by descending a back path into the garden, where he had a boat, which would quickly waft us from the fury of our foes.

When the soul is lost in despair, a ray of hope is a sun-beam which brightens the gloom. We put ourselves under his guidance, and set sail with the light of the stars. A while we sailed in peace; but a storm arose and threatened us with death. I exulted that I was with the King and Lamor, and preferred a watery grave to the arms of Albosirus.

I remember nothing further till I found myself in the hut of a shepherd, whose wife dried my cloaths, and with looks of humanity soothed my distress. But Memory recalled scenes that were past, and whispered, that the King and Lamor were buried in the deep. O, ye crystal palaces! I cried, let me descend to your pearly grottoes to find my friends! Let your waves unite me to Lamor, that on his neck I may expire.

In

In two days after, I went to the beach : talked in idea with the ghosts of my friends ; but hearing a confused murmur of voices, methought I heard Albofirus. Terror lent wings to my feet : I flew like a timid hare from the pursuing hounds ; beholding this desert, I sheltered myself in its gloom.

Strange is your tale of wo, said Alronald ! and hapless, O Princess ! is thy lot. The streams of adversity have rolled over your head ; but look to the guider of the storm, and hope. The triumph of the wicked shall vanish like smoke : soon or late justice must prevail, and lay the traitor's proud head low. The King and Lamor may have escaped the waves, and shared like you the care of humanity. Heighten not present evils with thoughts of future calamity ; but peaceful rest in these shades, whilst I gather fruit to refresh you at noon. He departed : and left her composed, like the moon emerging from dark clouds, and shading a faint lustre on grove and stream. He strayed beyond his usual haunts, till he approached the cleft of a hollow rock. He thus heard a voice of wo.

Thou art fallen, O Majesty ! from a high point of power into a gulph of complicated wo ! Stripped of royal trappings, where is now the word of command ? Shall the desert remember thy past felicity, or the vast rocks procure thee food ? Sink into nothing, O child of dust ! at the abject

State

state of a king, when adverse Fate blasts his visionary honours !

But, ah ! where is Selima ? The child of my tenderest love is buried in the deep. Rise, lovely beam of light ! gleam before thy wretched fire, and smooth the horrors of death : And thou, Grim King ! hasten thy blow. — Selima, O Selima ! I come to thee.

Alronald stood confessed to the eye of the King. His venerable gait inspired reverence ; but as one uncertain whether an object is real or illusive, he gazed in silence. Alronald thus began.

Fear not, O King ! The hand that corrected thee to try thy fortitude, can make this desert afford thee aid. Arise, and follow me, and wonder at the ways of Heaven to man.

What art thou, said he, that thus sootheest a fallen king ? A man, he replied, O King ! who once like thee felt the vicissitudes of human passions, and black ingratitude from those I loved.

As one condemned to die, and just about to feel the fatal blow, at the sound of pardon flies from the extremes of grief to joy, so felt the King, and his heart revived. He followed the Hermit to his cell ; who, on his way, prepared him to see Selima. He fell on her neck, crying, O Selima !

lima ! O my child ! let me die in peace since thou art safe from the fatal billows, and devouring monsters of the deep have not become thy tomb.

Her eye inquired for Lamor, and the King knew her penetrating look. He told her, they were wrecked together ; but the shades of night parted them unawares : That he took refuge in a hollow rock, from whence the Hermit, like a guardian spirit, snatched him from death.

Alronald made the King take food, and with reviving cordials cheered his spirits ; let him know how far Selima had related the history of his life.

But she has not told you my crimes and misfortunes, O worthy Hermit ! said the King. I view the finger of Heaven punishing my former vices by this correcting blow.

Oronto was a faithful subject, and advanced justly to the highest post in the kingdom. I prized him as a treasure ; nor did unbounded confidence lessen his respect. But his soul soared beyond the courtiers deceit. When he thought I was wrong, sincerity dropt from his lips. He became a faithful mirror, where all my failings glared to view. But, ah ! how weak is human reason ! and kings most apt to err, surrounded by sycophants, who flatter to betray. They envied his intimacy, and by degrees essayed to cool my

affections.



affections. Long was I deaf to their artful tales ; at last, they persuaded me he held traitorous designs on the crown : and they forged evidence against him to blind my senses. I gave orders to arrest him for treason, and confiscate his effects. Eager to procure his ruin, his enemies went to seize him at his house ; but being apprised of the cruel intention, he secretly conveyed himself away, and has never been heard of since. He carried away a box full of papers relative to the crown, the want of which has deprived me of my kingdom.

Oh, Oronto ! I have since learned thy innocence. But thou art past redress. Look down with pity, thou injured saint : O pardon an unhappy king.

Tears bedewed the Hermit's face. The King and Selima were astonished. Then throwing aside his long robe, he threw himself at the King's feet.

O sacred Majesty, he cried ! thou art forgiven. In me you behold Oronto, whom Heaven sent to this desert to save your life. Nay, doubt it not ; this box, which, in place of one full of gold, I carried away, shall yet restore you, and put your foes to flight.

As one who had lost a pearl in the grass de-  
spairs of finding it, sits down disconsolate ; at last,  
M viewing

viewing its bright glitter, is motionless with joy; so fat the King. It seemed one of those blissful illusions which a dream offers to the mind: he sought for words; but they wanted force. He sunk on his neck, and cried aloud.

Oh, Hermit! what dost thou say? Art thou indeed the much-injured Oronto? And do I owe my life, and all I prize, to that exalted nobleness I wronged? O Oronto! canst thou indeed forgive the credulous man, who thrust a faithful shepherd from his fold, and gave devouring wolves the sacred trust?

Forbear, O King! said Alronald; nor further wound my loyal heart, which here absolves you in the sight of Heaven. But let us think of some decisive stroke to blast the upstart interest of your foe.

Maturely weighing the important end, and planning every scheme with deep design, they issued forth. The Hermit in disguise roused the ancient Lords, who sighed for their king's unmerited distress, and rose in arms to redress his wrongs. The traitor Albosirus was soon routed; deserted by his faithless crew, he fled to a thicket wood, and took shelter below a tree.

Lamor, who had escaped the storm's rage, retired to the same tree, and was perched upon its

top to avoid being seen. He watched a proper season, and cut off the traitor's head.

Thus was the kingdom settled in peace. Lammor and Selima were united, and had a numerous race; whilst the old King and Oronto lived to a great age, contemplating the wonders of Providence, which had produced such amazing events.

HERMIT.

Thy words, Rutha, like soft music, vibrate on the ear, and convey this instructive truth, That Adversity can reach the highest rank; and Virtue, though depressed, by the aid of Heaven can rise superior to distress.

But whom do I descry through yonder glade, with stedfast look, and wild inquiring eye, as if he meant to question every bush, if what he seeks be hid beneath its shade?

OTHO.

Oh, my deliverer! he comes at last: kind Heaven restores him to my grateful heart. At this the strange unknown was at his feet: he grasped them, and dropt the tears of joy.

Favourite of Heaven! said Otho, why hast thou secluded thyself from my view? Let your interesting tale unveil the mystery, and charm our ears with native truth and virtue.

GELIN.

First let me celebrate with grateful thanks your  
 vast deliverance from your cruel foes. May he  
 who holds the chain that links events for ever  
 guard your steps from human guile.

C H A

## C H A P. V.

## The History of GELIN.

**A**S Phœbus' early beams gild with orient pearl  
 the surface of the deep, so smooth and fair  
 rose the morn of my life. Where the high moun-  
 tains of Lubar raise their proud tops to the skies,  
 in a vale below, whose banks are fertilised by a  
 rich stream, Lord Arco lived, munificent, brave,  
 and good. I viewed him as my father, and my  
 infant days were nursed with love and affection  
 under shade of his fostering wings.

The page of Learning was early displayed to  
 my view; whilst wisdom and piety were stamped  
 on my heart, ere it knew vice, or the habits or  
 customs of common life had mingled with the no-  
 ble maxims, and sullied their purity. Glorious  
 method of forming the soul. If mine hath since  
 strayed from rectitude, malignant Fate pushed me  
 on: my heart has never ceased to revere Virtue's  
 sacred form.

Fleeting as a pleasing dream fled the days of  
 my youth. My progress in learning gave pleasure  
 to my Lord. My only ambition was, to gain his  
 applause; and his praises pushed me on to fame.



I had attained my fifteenth year, blessed with a sister, as I then thought, whose lovely form made me figure the appearance angels make in heaven. One day my Lord led me into a thick arbour, remote from human eye or ear, and thus addressed me.

Hitherto, Gelin, thy acquirements, thy docility, thy form, but most the excellence that dwells in thy heart, endears thee to mine. But listen to a secret I am going to reveal : Thou art not my son ! Nay, start not ; neither art thou sprung from any of my race.

A tremor seized my frame ; my eyes grew dim. I dropped motionless on the ground. He raised me up ; but I instantly threw myself at his feet and bathed them with my tears. Oh ! my Lord cried I in astonishment, who am I ? Good my Lord, inform me what I am.

A brave youth, he replied, whose virtuous soul exceeds an empire. I gave thee not birth ; but have formed your heart, whose worth amply repays my care. You love Zila, said he with a steadfast look : love her still with a brother's fondness ; but charge thine heart not to exceed the sacred bonds. She is betrothed, O Gelin ! to a destined wife of another ; and when she is of age her marriage will take place. You will then support our age, when the years come which know no joy.

He led me back, and left me to ruminate on the discovery. I fell on my face, and wept till the shades of Night surprised me in the woful employment.

Zila was then no longer my sister ; but I found that idea increased my regard, though reserve took place of my former frankness. I trembled as she approached, and knew not why. She wept at the change, and complained to my Lord. He explained the mystery, and joy again sparkled on her brow. How capricious is love ! her gladness pierced my soul with wo.

You rejoice then, Zila, said I, that I have lost the rank of your brother. I do, she replied, with a sweet smile, and find it increaseth my love ; I shall love you for ever with undiminished regard. Scarce could I rein in my transports ; but checked by my Lord's caution, I left her presence.

I must omit a thousand marks of regard which an artless passion mutually inspired us with. Three years flew away on rapid wings. Her beauty bloomed forth in such splendor as might have softened the heart of age. My passion knew no bounds ; restraint increased its violence ; my health fell a victim to the inward struggle. My torment was such I could bear it no longer. Again I threw myself at my Lord's feet, crying, Pardon ! a criminal that pleads guilty, who has betrayed your confidence, is below your esteem. I love Zila  
with

with a passion death alone can abate; but with purity equal to the object on which it is placed: Banish me your presence; let me die at a distance; but let me be just.

Adown his venerable cheek rolled the pearly drop. He raised me up; seated me by him; pressed my hand, and said, Noble youth, ought I not to have feared this, and removed thee far from a trial so severe? Heaven knows I would prize thee for my son before the first prince on earth; but my wife's kinsman is the destined husband of Zila, and nothing will make her relinquish her scheme.— Zila seems averse to this marriage; though in two months hence it must take place. Ah! should she partake of your malady!—But leave me at present. Your future peace must employ my thoughts. Remember, Virtue overcomes every evil.

In a few days after he entered my apartment. My dear Gelin, said he, I have been trying to secure your future tranquillity, and have procured a company for you in the regiment of my friend. At once I could have set thee higher; but your merit will soon do the rest; and when the cause is removed that tears thee from us, you will return again with laurels on your brow.

When the heart is torn with despair, the voice of honour ceases to allure. As a sick man swallows a potion in hopes of ease, so did I think

war as a drug. I had read of Heroism, and  
glowed with ardour at the thoughts of subduing  
myself. Vain chimeras ! useless pages that fly  
from practice.

Exerting all my fortitude, I went to bid adieu  
to Zila. On viewing her pale face, my fortitude  
fled ; my voice was lost ; I had almost burst into  
tears. She led me to a seat, and, with anxious  
solicitude, demanded the cause of my trembling.

Charming Zila ! said I, philosophy must now  
triumph in Gelin. He is going to take an ever-  
lasting leave of all he values, forget what he has  
been, and seek in distant climes for empty fame.  
But if Zila be happy, he will rejoice in her feli-  
city. May he who gains so rich a prize, love you  
with half the ardour of Gelin. Adieu, thou angel !  
the pangs of death will be less severe than this se-  
paration. Bedewing her face with my tears, I  
tore myself away. She caught hold of my robe,  
saying, Leave me not, barbarous Gelin ! leave me  
not ! With you I must likewise fly. Alas ! ne-  
ver shall I become the wife of another.

Cruel Zila ! I exclaimed, how you increase my  
torment ! Oh ! how you swell my sufferings.—Ah,  
Gelin ! she said, and fainted away.—I called her  
women ; and leaving her to their care, rushed to  
my apartment, and dissolved into tears.

Next morning my Lord and I set out for the  
camp.

camp. We were received with politeness and affability. My Lord recommended me in terms the most obliging, and we parted with mutual regret. Each officer showed me the highest regard, wishing to infuse a thirst of glory in my soul. Alas! my heart was insensible, as a deaf man sits unmoved at Music's melting airs.

At last I began to listen to the sound of Honour, and did not despair of gaining renown. Six weeks elapsed, when our army was ordered to a distant land. I sent my servant to acquaint my Lord, and bid adieu to Zila. He returned with a sum of money from my Lord, with an order to draw upon him at pleasure; telling me, Zila had sent a youth, who would in private deliver her commands. I ordered the youth to my closet, and felt emotions too exquisite for language at the thoughts of a message from Zila. Judge then my transports, Noble Otho, when I felt myself grasped by Zila herself.

Heavens, Zila! said I, am I awake? Is this illusion Zila? — My dearest Zila, what strange disguise? — Despise me not, Gelin, she said with a sigh. The pure soul is above formal rules: — To thee I fly from paternal rage. I am thine, O Gelin! let us fly together, else I will die at your feet.

Her falling tears bedewed my hands. The vain sound of Honour, Glory, and False Virtue, fled away, as a vapour hovering on the mountain-tops



is dispelled by the sun's warm ray. Beauty and peerless innocence subdued me. I swore no power on earth should ever tear her from my heart.

I sent an account of the truth to my Lord, imploring forgiveness for the crime. In the dead of night my servant returned, who said, my Lady was inexorable; insisted on having Zila married to her kinsman; and, ere to-morrow's sun, she would be seized by the guards.

Tapping softly at the door of her apartment, I bade her arise; explained the danger that hovered over our heads. She conjured me to lose no time, but fly away. The motions of my soul accorded but too well with her tears. She had brought jewels and money to a great value. I put her behind me on a fleet horse; and whilst darkness concealed our route, quickly rode off. By day-break I spied a large town; where finding a proper inn, I made Zila retire to rest. When she awaked, I procured a priest, who united us for ever in the most indissoluble bonds: and from the extreme of anxiety and grief, we tasted consummate felicity. Moving forward in the night-season to avoid pursuit, in eight days we arrived at Carria. In a small village I hired a house and garden, where we experienced that sublime pleasure resulting from so pure an union. Three years flew away in harmony and peace, we were blessed with a son and daughter. The sweet prattlers increased our fondness, and ingrossed our care.—But

our money insensibly wore away; Want reared its meagre form, and threatened us with ruin.

I often proposed to go and throw myself at Lord Arco's feet, who perhaps might relent, and restore us to favour. But Zila trembled lest some misfortune should befall me; and wept so bitterly, I gave over all thoughts of leaving her, though I beheld Misery with all her dismal train approaching.

Balmy sleep forsook mine eyes. To conceal my wo, I would often steal to a shady vale, and ruminate on my misfortunes. One day, fatigued with care, I fell asleep, where the following dream was impressed on my fancy.

A venerable old man stood before me, just such a figure as this Reverend Hermit wears. Having viewed me a while, with a look of compassion, he spoke as follows.

Son of Affliction! why dost thou weep and indulge despair? Must not those who have erred from rectitude be chastened into duty? In the bosom of the earth a treasure is concealed, which will scatter plenty over your race. Nature is satisfied with little;—receive that little from yourself. Luxury and idleness prepare a gulph which swallows up the third part of men.

On awaking from my dream, a dawn of joy dispelled

pelled the gloom. Heaven, said I, instructs me in this vision. The moral points out industry to my view, as the only means of preserving my dear Zila from want. I straightway hired myself amongst your day-labourers, most noble Otho; and as you never slept with the wages of an hireling, I every night received more than amply supplied all our wants.

Zila exerted herself in the cares of the house, and in the childrens dress. Clean, elegant, lovely, and serene, she met me at night with so placid a smile, as made me forget the toils of the day. Her constant solicitude to please, rendered our little hamlet a haven of joy.

But, alas! my son caught a dangerous fever. Zila never left his bed; and lest our support had failed, I toiled in the field by day, and relieved her watchings by night. Severe task! which impaired my strength. My daughter likewise grew ill, which forced me to relinquish work; as Zila, wore out with anxious toil, grew worse than either. — Alas! what could I do? My money was all gone. I borrowed for some time of my neighbours, till doubting of being repaid, they coldly denied me their aid. I often meant to pour my sad tale into some worthy ear, but false shame stopped my tongue.

Two days passed, and we tasted no food. Disease raged, — Death seemed to approach in the most hideous

hideous form. — Oh Gelin ! said Zila, all is over. Death will part us for ever. Had I not plunged you into this gulf of wo, I would go a willing victim. Think kindly of Zila, my dear Gelin. — Gracious Powers support you, and she fainted away. — I threw water on her face, and she opened her eyes, pressed my hands, then closed them, as I thought, for ever.

Despair and madness filled my soul. I snatched up a pistol, and rushed out. Faint with hunger, and dreading all I prized on earth was perishing, I groaned aloud ; I sighed to the hollow air.

At that moment you appeared, most noble Otho. You know the rest. Your exalted benevolence plucked me from Ruin's horrid jaw. How fervently did I supplicate the powers of heaven to bless you !

I flew, and procured restoring cordials to my fainting family, and entered my house as if a mountain had rolled off my back. I made Zila swallow some wine, which by degrees restored her exhausted spirits, and lulled her into a deep slumber. As a guardian angel tends his charge, so did I watch with solicitude, and beheld with joy the fever abate, and my children calm.

When she awoke, I approached her bed, saying, Comfort yourself, my dear Zila, we are relieved;  
hunger

hunger and thirst shall fly away. I showed her some gold; at which she clasped her fair hands together, and cried aloud, What miracle hath come to thine aid! or hath thy virtue, O Gelin! hath thine innocence fled to save us? If what I dread be true, would to Heaven I had sunk to the tomb. Wretched Zila! to what lowly pitch of debasement hast thou reduced the best of men? Tears stopped her speech, and I mingled mine with the lovely mourner's. At last by degrees I unfolded the truth to her ear, and she burst into a rapture of grateful thanks.

Poor is the adulation paid to kings compared to the incense you then received from hearts unfortunate, but not vicious. I was roused by the fobbing of my boy, whose little heart melted at the moving scene. Alarmed for his tender health, I soothed him into peace. Serenity again returned, and every brow sparkled with joy. Your bounty prevented me from leaving my family; but, inured to labour, I wrought in my garden, till it resembled the residence of the first pair.

When the news of your first misfortune, and flight from your foes, reached mine ear, I watched your motions with vigilance and care; I beheld you enter the wilderness, and dreaded your falling a prey to hunger. Heaven, favourable to my ardent prayer, made me the means of your escape. I returned to Zila, who devoutly rendered praise where it was most due.

But



But when we heard of your castle being burnt, and viewed the flames reaching the skies, how did Zila tear her hair, and beat her breast in vain !

I flew to Carria, and heard it was done by order of the King, and curst him in the bitterness of my heart ; exclaiming aloud, If distributive justice rules on high, the hand of Heaven must vindicate this wrong ; will mingle in his cup a bitter draught ; will blast the tyrant's elevated joys, and make him tremble on his lofty throne.

As I ended, you drew nigh. I saw your grief, astonishment, and wo ; beheld you bound, and hurried away ; and wept at my want of power to set thee free.

Now Gelin, said Zila, lose no time ; fly, and try to save our Noble benefactor. Watchful Providence must give thee success, or virtue is below the care of Heaven.

I soon reached your prison, and found the keeper your friend. I offered him a large sum, which he nobly rejected. He said, No treaure could bribe him to hurt your peace ; and to lessen your calamity was of itself the highest reward.

I returned to Zila, and gave her an account of your fate ; but anxious, and fearful of some new machination, she urged me again to your prison.

I met the keeper by the way, under a strong guard. Advancing near him, he whispered thus in mine ear : Ruin hovers over Otho ; endeavour to avert the blow.

This made me change my first intention : I disguised myself in mean garments, daubed my face, put on a large wig, and mixed with the vile crew ; and by abusive language, seemed to them your mortal foe. This succeeded to my wish. A wretched figure, seduced by poverty, thus addressed me.

If your soul thirsteth for Otho's ruin, his death will quickly satiate your rage. His death ! I exclaimed with a forced smile : how dost thou know he is to die ? I am hired, he replied, to kill him ; but must give him his choice of poison or the sword.

Oh ! said I, affecting the rage of joy, let me atchieve the noble deed. How, said he, and lose my reward. Alas ! it is hunger and poverty, whose stern demand made me accept the infernal office, though from my soul I detest the deed.

I offered to double his hire, if he would resign the execution to me ; and showed him gold, subtle charmer of the human heart. It prevailed ; and to conceal the emotions of my soul, I seemed mad with joy.

I allowed him to usher in the implements of death, but had agreed he would retire at my sign. You know the rest; Heaven favoured my plot, and Virtue eluded unmerited rage. I had provided myself with the means of support. When it was late, the keeper entered the prison. Lifting up the mantle, he gazed awhile in my pale face; but thinking me cold dead, he began to strip off my rich garments. I pinched his hands, and grinned so horribly in his face, he shrieked aloud, and fell to the ground. The noise brought in the rest: He cried, The Ghost! The Ghost! and they all fled, as a flock of sheep evades the murderer of our folds.

Silent as the chambers of the grave I was deserted; and meant next evening to have availed myself of their fears, and steal away, when this noble person arrived, whose pardon gave me liberty.

I hastened to Zila, whose eye melted at the horrid tale. She hurried me away to find out your retreat. I have found you O generous ill-used Otho! I venerate the powers of Heaven, and am at peace.

#### HERMIT.

Your artless tale is dictated by truth, thou hapless criminal to Passion's sway! In stern Affliction's furnace thou hast been tried. Your stars, more than your soul, produced your fall. Hadst thou disclosed

disclosed your wants to generous Otho, he had relieved your woes, and saved your guilt: but that is past; and sure high Heaven absolves thee from the crime.

But one effort remains: Go and present yourself to good Lord Arco. Think how he pines beneath a load of wo, mourning his hapless children, dead, or worthless. Whilst ye are both secluded from his view, offended Heaven will never cease to frown. Ah! knowest thou not a parent's eager soul?

Gelin bowed low to the earth, and kissed the Hermit's robe. Rutha offered to accompany him to Lord Arco's, as soon as he had settled his friend in peace. Exchanging mutual promises of friendship, Gelin departed. Rutha conducted Otho to his sweet retreat. The shades of evening approached mild, and Darkness veiled the world with its sable wing.

## C H A P. VI.

**H**Ail ! heaven-descended Virtue ! Salutory are thy benign effects to the soul, when the messenger of Affliction paves the way, and clears the mud, which oft in the smooth current of Prosperity is apt to grow.

The soul of Otho feels its divine power. His dwelling is the retreat of Innocence and Peace; more blest than when the sycophant poured his designing tale into his unsuspecting ears. He beholds the airy hopes which the great inspire, faithless as the rude blasts which dash the seamen amongst the rocks; and unfeeling as the waves, who, heedless of the hapless victims, cruelly sport with their wo.

From the streams of Philosophy he had imbibed a healing draught, mingled with Religion's power: his hopes were fixed on heaven. To those who place their confidence on high,—the wind of Adversity may blow aloud. They stand secure, like a large tree on the mountains, when the northern blast strews on earth the pride of the vales.

One evening, as he sat beneath a spreading elm, whose branches embraced a large circle, he beheld with how mild a lustre the last beams of the setting



setting sun gild the world. Thou glorious luminary! said he, art to the earth what Rutha is to me. Whilst present, he animates and improves my heart: whilst absent, the force of his placid virtues affect my soul, and sooth my passions into peace. — But yonder he comes with impatient haste: the wild fury of necessity has lent him the feet of youth.

What moves the soul of Rutha? said Otho, with a sigh. Has my friend tasted Misfortune's cup? or feels his benevolent heart for the unappy? Calamity flies promiscuous below, and often crushes exalted worth.

Make haste, Otho, Rutha replied. Thou friend of the miserable, let us relieve a wretch, on whose quivering lips Death sits suspended. Whilst we talk, perhaps he is gone, and renders our aid useless.

This was enough to Otho. He ordered his servants to fly after with warm garments, and cordial drops. He followed Rutha to the desert, and found the sad victim in the jaws of Death.

Alas! said Otho, we come too late. Life and misery are fled together. Perhaps this abject creature, now forlorn and pale, once tasted of Fortune's gifts, and offered the cup of joy; though Hunger's ruthless hand, I fear, has struck the blow. Mean time the servants arrived; who rubbed

bed him with spirits, till a faint sigh gave some signs of life. They rolled him in warm garments, and carried him to the house of Otho, where he soon revived. By their attention, and hospitable care, he lost in peaceful slumbers a sense of his wo.

As the angels of Humanity watch over the children of distress, so did Otho and his godlike friend tend this victim of wo. At last he awaked, threw his languid eyes around him, and thus exclaimed.

Where am I? O powers above! do I still breathe? Why has not a thunderbolt blasted me to the centre of the earth, and buried in her gloomy womb a wretch unworthy of light? Oh! could I relent! could my tears appease offended Heaven! how gladly would I invoke death, and silent mix with clay! But, ah! the injured form of ruined Otho glares by my view, and drives me to despair.

Otho heard with astonishment the strange tale, and traced in the wretched figure then before him the features of the once gay Avignon: but lest his appearance had proved fatal, he beckoned Rutha to approach him; which he did, and spoke in these terms.

From whence, O child of Misery! proceeds thy despair? and why is terror painted on thy brow?

Let

[ III ]

Let not guilt, however complicated, deter thy sighs from penetrating the heavenly throne? Hast thou bounded the mercies of Omnipotence, or fixed limits to his gracious love? Has not his Providence snatched thee from death? Let that interposition inspire hope. The great author of our being never rejected the sincere penitential sigh.

AVIGNOR.

Blessed be thy words, O messenger of peace! who designest to raise a wretch from wo. Death pursues me fast, and conscience registers my former guilt. Ah! canst thou view my presence without horror? for well I know thee, reverend Lord, the godlike friend of that exalted man my malice wronged. You weep: Celestial powers! this is an emblem of the heavenly minds, and almost softens me to tears of penitence. How shall I expiate my former crimes?

RUTHA.

Successful hardened Vice excites contempt; but when the victim feels its awful sting, trembling hopes, yet scarce dares ask for mercy, soft Pity rises in an angel's form, disarms at once the rage that guilt inspired, bids us join the penitential sigh, and fervently implore the sacred throne for peace and pardon to the wretch's heart.

Tell the producing motives that impelled, that urged

urged rage to such unbounded height, to ruin excellence that never wronged you.

AVIGNOR.

Ask why infernal rage in heaven prevailed, or why in Eden's beautiful abode it envied innocence, and wrought its fall; then question why this guilty wretched heart pined at matchless worth I wished to blast. The lustre of his merit shone so bright, I meant to throw his virtues in eclipse; and, whilst I gratified my own revenge, I soon became the tool of those in power, who, with false hopes, buoyed up my foolish mind to sink him in his sovereign's esteem. But as the blaze of thorns soon expires, so quick dissolves the leagues commenced in vice. As interest varies, or as schemes misgive, the tottering basis shakes; like morning-mist, the fabric glides in air.

Oh! had I sacrificed my youthful prime to Virtue or Religion's sacred laws, some inward consolation might have sprung, and to my parting moments added peace, in spite of poverty, reproach, and scorn. Yet sure I feel a calm. Despair has left my heart, and hope appears. Then hearken to my words whilst I can speak, ere Death, the wretch's comfort, lay me low. Eased of my crimes, and soothed by such worth, my soul will try to ask for heavenly grace, and throw its whole resource on sacred mercy.

The

## The History of AVIGNOR.

WITH the events of my birth and infancy I need not tire your ear. Perhaps you may have heard, that my father was a principal servant to great Ludovico; nor need I draw his eulogium higher than to say, he was beloved by Otho, the father of your friend.

Had he lived to behold his wretched son, to the measure of my crimes would have been added, filling his aged eyes with tears, and killing him with sorrow. But he is low in the tomb, and I remain a stain to his name: for he breathed with care the precepts of Virtue on my heart, and pointed out the path of Fame to my view. But as a blasted branch from a stately vine withers and falls away, so did my Virtue fail in the day of trial, and when measured by temptation was found light.

Ambition drove the archfiend from heaven, and to that ill-placed passion I owe my ruin. Treated with familiarity by the young prince, I vainly sought to secure his favour, and supplant every person in his esteem. The affection the old King showed to Otho, his amazing knowledge and high name, planted the seeds of envy in my heart ere I knew the force of their malignity.



The Prince was a slave to pleasure, which he hid from the King's view by an artful veil. In facilitating his amorous schemes I became useful, and blessed my stars for gaining so envied a height. But I pass over our juvenile schemes, as unworthy your ear, till I attended the Prince to the battle of Haimaroe. There, removed from our wonted haunts, my genius was required in starting something new; and as the sagacious hound disturbs the timid hare, and drives her into Ruin's jaw, so did my guileful tongue, aided by the Prince's gold, promote seduction.

I watched your visits to the lovely Ermina. Pardon me, Noble Rutha, whilst I avow my guilt. I fired the Prince with a picture of your charming bride, and urged him to perpetrate the horrible deed, which was frustrated by the valiant arm of Otho. — Rage and Madness took place in my breast; Revenge ever after filled my soul; though his rank and favour with the King awed the grim visage of Malice, which durst not approach the meridian of his glory.

But nothing is fixed on this fluctuating scene. The good King departed this life; and Virtue, which so long triumphed on the throne, was soon after totally eclipsed.

Otho remained unrivalled in the King's affections; nor was it easy for guileful Envy, aided by the powers of hell, ever to pull him down.

After my advancement, having served the King in some trivial matters, I attempted to lessen the merit of Otho. He sternly cried, Whence this insolence? Dare you mention Otho without respect? Hence from my presence, varlet; and blest your stars if I don't say for ever.

I threw myself at his feet; but rushing from me with disdain, I trembled like the leaf that always vibrates; nor durst I appear before him for a season.

Gusto was then in power: to whom I applied; and he put me again in my place. But the King did not deign to give me any notice. But from that day Gusto heaped favours on my head, and let slip no opportunity of praising me to the King. I rose by degrees; and Vanity erected her throne in my heart. But Malice, with its direful effects, glowed with redoubled rage.

At that time I ruined the peace of a beautiful virgin, whose affections I had gained by every soothing art. And though I loved her above all others, my taste for pleasure made me trifle with her tenderness. Oh Almira! how unworthy was I of a heart like thine!

Gusto at last let me know he hated Otho. What avails, said he, the honours of my state, the power, the envied rank I hold at court, whilst he rivals me in the King's heart, and robs me of

his confidence? O Avignor! attempt to pull him down; and golden honour, rank, and power, are thine.

My ardour to destroy his peace made me restless and uneasy: for Malice and Envy are unquiet passions, and where they reside, never fail to plant furies in the breast.

When the malice of Elpenor threw him into prison, a gloomy joy took place in my breast; and though I knew the action had disgraced Elpenor, I eagerly circulated, the blow came from the King.

Thus my malice took effect. Many who before had envied his intimacy, vented their spleen against him by false reports; the greatest part of which I originally invented. And when he sent Leonardo to court, with high encomiums on his worth, by the most insinuating manner I gained his confidence. He was now innocent, unacquainted with guile. When he spoke of Otho, a grateful tear stood trembling in his eye.

At length I told him Otho's favour was on the decline; that the King wished to be rid of him; that nothing could raise him higher with Gusto than to supplant him in the government of Carria. At first he felt horror at my shocking scheme, but the sensitive plant shrinks from human touch; but repeated efforts awaked ambition in his soul, and lulled his generosity asleep.

Long was the King's ear deaf to their tales, though Falsehood arose in her sharpest form to hasten his ruin. — At last it prevailed. He signed the fatal deed, which plunged in sad distress the best of men.

Had Justice prevailed, the cause of Otho had turned the scales. But seldom doth the preponderate when balanced with Royal power. Virtue and Truth found no retreat in that partial court; but had, long before that period, displayed their white wings, and fled away.

But Otho's ruin was long a doubtful point. His merit was deeply rooted in the King's heart; and lest affection had triumphed over his foes, I hired four assassins to murder him in his way to Carria. But Heaven, ever watchful of the just, defeated my hellish scheme.

But Malice prevailed in the end. He lost his cause, and was proclaimed a traitor. I mingled with the rude crew who went to confiscate his goods; and, by the power of gold, urged them to set his castle on fire.

Oh! how Vice defeats its own purpose! Far from feeling happiness at Otho's ruin, a secret gloom sat brooding in my soul; which in order to dispel, I plunged into every sort of vice.

At this period the King's ill humour increased.

None

None durst approach him without feeling some visible marks of his chagrin. Otho, said he, has fallen from my hopes : where then is Truth to be found ? Go, ye flatterers, disturb me not with your idle breath. — Thus abashed, they left his presence. Gusto, more dispirited than the rest, was covered with mortal sadness. This Otho, would he say, will ruin us all. I wish I had not embarked on so tempestuous an ocean. All is lost, O Avignor, I am undone.

A spark from hell kindled a fury in my soul. To destroy Otho I thought was the only means of giving Gusto peace. Nor did I disclose my scheme when I set out for the prison ; where I felt new remorse at the greatness of his fame. I borrowed the name of power to send the keeper away, who would have risked his life to have warded off any blow from Otho ; nor was it easy, with the help of gold, to seduce a pale figure to take away his life.

But when the news of his death arrived at court, those whom envy alone had ever made his foes, lift up their voice, and wept.

It was then your Noble wife drew aside the veil which concealed the truth from the King. Those latent sparks which Malice had choked, burst into flame ; and Otho, injured Otho, with all his gentleness and worth, stood confest.

But



But as a lion lifts up his loud voice in the desert when the hand of Violence tears away his young, so roared the King.

Art thou fallen, Otho ! he cried, a victim to hellish rage ! and thus thy loyalty repaid by Agendemon ! Wretched state of Royal power ! where fawning sycophants for ever pry ; and Truth, the emblem of angelic minds, never un-mixed can touch the ear of kings.

He called for Gusto ; who entered trembling. He demanded the truth of Otho's fate in a stern tone. His death, said he, unveils the plot : Himself injured, and his King abused. — Traitor ! restore me Otho, or your head shall answer for his life.

Gusto fell on his knees ; took Heaven to witness he knew nothing of the matter Go then, and learn it, said the King ; till I am at the bottom of this dark affair, sleep shall be a stranger to mine eyes.

Gusto retired ; disorder, shame, and grief, were fixed on his brow. He threw himself into a chair with every mark of despair.

That moment I entered ; and seeing him so oppressed with wo, imagined my news would whisper peace. Cheer up, my Lord, said I ; all is your own : Otho sleeps with his fathers, and shall disquiet you no more.

What !

What ! cried he, rising in a haste, is Otho then dead ? Yes, my Lord, said I ; my arm has achieved the bold deed ; and stern as my hate was, remorse would have calmed my rage, till viewing your interest, sympathy fled from my breast.

And dares a murderer make me an accomplice in his crime ? said he, with rage glancing in his eyes. Monster, avaunt ! Thy presence fills me with horror. — Guards ! take this parricide. Throw him into some dark cell, fit only to conceal his crimes. — Consternation stopped my tongue ; I yielded in silence to my fate. I was thrown into a dungeon, dark and comfortless ; but light as noon-day to the state of my soul. Worth like yours, Noble Rutha, cannot figure my misery. Guilt made me weak and gloomy. I had merited correction by my vicious life, but was unable to bear the blow. Innocence alone resists oppression. Conscience whispers peace and happiness ; but mine tore me to pieces. Whatever way I turned, Despair glared by my view in a horrid form.

One evening, a domestic of the King's, whom I had obliged in the days of my power, entering my prison, told me what passed betwixt the King and Gusto previous to my imprisonment : That he, to free himself, represented me as a monster ; and that the King had sworn to sacrifice me to the manes of Otho.—He left me, and I wept aloud. Fortitude was a stranger to my soul. Vice had  
 enervated

enervated each noble spring, and the false pride which swelled my vain heart, fled at Misfortune's stern approach, and left Despair in its place.

The keeper introduced a woman in a veil; and said, her tears had moved him to give her admittance: bid us, on going out, be quick, as he durst not leave us long together.

She gazed in silence. I could observe a tear glimmer in her eye. An awful curiosity took place in my heart, as if her words could have fixed my doom. On dropping her veil, I beheld the well-known face of the much-injured Almira. Had a huge mountain been ready to fall on my head, I could not have felt more dread. I had hurt her peace, and ruined her fame, but could not bear her just rebuke. I beat my breast, tore my hair, and threw myself on the ground.

Ill-fated wretched Avignor! said she, dread not me:—such misery excludes all reproach. A shameful death, preceded by tortures, to-morrow must end your course. You have indeed taken from my life every source that could give it joy;—yet I feel myself eager to add some length to thine. You must escape in my cloaths; else by this time to-morrow that form you have so much admired will be reduced to clay.

Amazement filled my heart as she spoke. The desire of life swelled my soul. I threw myself at  
 Q her

her feet, but she checked my transports, by urging my danger. I put on her robes, and helped her to dress in mine. Having some gold in my pockets, which she would not keep, I slipped a piece in the keeper's hand, and passed unobserved. Quaking with fear, I flew through the streets. The scenes of former guilt knew me no more: I rushed from their view, with the haste of a traveller pursued by a serpent.

Concealing myself in a remote corner, till I procured cloathing fitted to my sex, then flying all human converse, I hid myself in this wild. But accumulated guilt deprived me of hope;—till glancing at the worth of the matchless Almira, admiration and joy took place in my breast; when, in midst of those raptures, two ruffians came and robbed me of my gold. As I resisted, they beat me unmercifully, and left me for dead; and, but for your assistance, I had finished my course.

This, O Noble Rutha! is my sad tale. You see I am unworthy of your care. But strike a poinard to my heart, and snatch at once a wretch from wo.

#### RUTHA.

Horrid are the events of thy vicious life, O child of wo! Yet fly the rocks of black despair; repent of vice, and regain peace. But as thy narrative must have weakened thy powers, I leave thee to repose.

A fever seized him soon after, which for some time made life a doubtful point. At last Nature prevailed; Disease subsided, and left the patient calm. Heaven wrought a change in his hard heart, and made it dissolve in penitential tears.

Early one morning, when all was calm, when the sun's first beams enliven the earth, Rutha walked out to taste the fresh air. The melody of the groves inspired him with joy, and tuned his soul to a divine flow, in venting his praise to Heaven.

By a brook, which trickled through a pleasing grove, he spied a maid, whose beauty was eclipsed with a cloud of wo. She walked with slow and disturbed steps: often clasping her fair hands together, she threw her supplicating eyes to Heaven.

The softest pity resides in noble minds. Rutha felt the godlike glow. Accosting her in so gracious a style as quickly banished distrust, she straightway eased her sad soul, by giving him an ample detail of her wo.

#### RUTHA.

And art thou then that heroic maid who saved from death the author of your wo? Follow me, thou fair disconsolate, I will conduct you to an asylum of peace.



By the way he informed her of all he knew of Avignor, and where he was; as likewise the happy prospect that dawned on his reformation. He presented her to the family of Otho, who had been interested by her affecting adventure. But a mixture of passions suppressed her speech, though Gratitude beamed in her eye, as she looked on each by turns. A gush of tears relieved her swollen heart, and thus to her noble audience she began.

You have heard, O worthy spectators, of my wo, of my disaster, the grief of which laid an aged mother in the tomb. When I complained to Avignor, far from easing my wounded heart, he talked in so loose a style as filled me with horror. Though passion made me weak, my heart was uncorrupted. But loving too tenderly the cause of all my grief, I resolved for ever to exclude myself from his sight.

I retired to an uncle I had in a distant land, whose ear was a stranger to my sad tale. Fame and prosperity had crowned his days. He received me with paternal fondness, and having no children, resolved to adopt me for his own. Serenity and calm settled in my heart, although it was a stranger to joy.

But Altho, a man of fortune and renown, asked me in marriage. The heart of my uncle leaped for joy, and blest the charms of his niece.

My

My wounds then bled afresh. I had loved Avignor, though unworthy, with fo pure a flame, as excluded and bade defiance to a second wound. I threw myself at my uncle's feet, implored his pity with tears, told him I was averfe to wed, and wifhed to fpend my days under his protection. He called me diftracted, and left me to weep. I then availed myfelf of Altho's juftice to fave us both from a crime; affured him I had been unhappy, but could not be unjuft. He bathed my hand with his tears, and looked unutterable things. Oh! had I never known Avignor, fuch merit would have melted my heart; but that was paff, and memory, foe to peace, rivetted too firm the fatal tie.

Fair Almira, faid Altho with a figh! I love thee too well to produce thee a moment's pain. To reflection and time I truft my happinefs, and fhall make your uncle reverence your virtues.

He was eloquent in the ftrange task: but my uncle, heedlefs of the refined orator, burft into rage; and as the angry elements make the feamen tremble, fo did his wrath deprive me of motion. Audacious girl! faid he, fly from my prefence: Leave my houfe, and free me from your fight. I obeyed; and once more committed myfelf to the care of Heaven.

I went to the capital of Polyolbion; where I heard of your death, moft noble Otho; the  
King's

King's rage at Avignor, with the wretched death he was to die. Though conscious of his plunging me in ruin, yet I rent my cloaths, and wept.

The thought then struck me which I happily executed. He escaped in my robes, whilst I remained in prison.

Next morning the keeper, with a rueful face, bade me prepare for death, as I would die by noon. I smiled in his face, and he knew the cheat. Ah! said he, I am undone. You have plotted Avignor's escape. I see you are a woman. He flew to Gusto with the news; who ordered me strict confinement till his pleasure should be known; whilst I exulted in the deed I had atchieved, and resigned myself to the care of Heaven.

Last night the keeper told me I was at liberty. The King is dead, said he, and you are free. I put on in haste womens apparel, and wandered forth to indulge my sad thoughts unseen, when Lord Rutha ended my uncertain route.

This is my sad tale, O renowned hearers! How awful is the finger of Providence. The guilty wretched murderer relieved by that exalted heart he wished to blast. How does such greatness raise thee above men, and give us a glimpse of heavenly goodness.

She ended; all her audience dropped a tear.  
Otho

Otho and Rutha rose in haste. The King's death occasioned a great alarm; and they gave to his memory many a tear.

Avignor was restored to health. A power from Heaven had totally changed his heart. In these two Lords he beheld to what eminence real goodness exalts the heart of man. He was united to Almira in lawful bonds, and virtue from thence took place in his heart. Rutha placed them in a calm retreat, with ample means to procure the blessings of life. Almira emerged from wo, as the moon after an eclipse sheds a brighter ray on grove and stream.

Rest in peace, repenting pair. May past misfortunes whisper caution, and undeserved mercy furnish a lasting tribute of praise.

C H A P.

## C H A P. VII.

**P**Eace, thou gentle dweller of the vale! thy smiles inspire the soul with unmixed joy; thou enlivenest desert's rugged brow, and whisperest music from the voice of the breeze.

Hail, sacred guest! divine inmate of the humble heart! Thou smoothest the iron hand of Adversity, by opposing Patience with her gentle train. Thou dwellest not in the halls of kings; thou shunest the courtier's hollow smile, but fliest to Retirement's calm abode, with thy inseparables, Innocence and Truth.

Otho felt its benign influence. His heart, weaned from rank and show, felt an inward complacency at his lot. Plenty again reared her head, and filled his heart with the sublimest pleasure, by ministering relief to human wo.

Rutha and the Hermit proved a constant feast to his soul. Whilst they discoursed on matters high, the ills of life appeared a fleeting dream. They were seated on a sacred eminence, above the blasts of disorderly Passion, whose wretched votaries are dragged in chains.

Rutha had accompanied Gelin to Lord Arco's.  
Some



Some days were elapsed since his expected return. Otho went to the mountain-tops, where he beheld the Hermit along with him. He flew to meet them with a heart full of joy.

The Hermit had sealed the lips of Rutha, till Otho's presence gave a relish to the interesting tale. They went to the bower; and seating themselves in order, thus Rutha began.

When I left you, my friends, I went to court, and found the King's death had involved it in silent wo. He had great qualities, though mixed with faults; and over the latter death drew a veil.

With an awful solemnity we laid him in the tomb, and shed many tears over the Royal corpse; nor could I forbear this silent exclamation.

O Agendemon! art thou then low? thou who erewhile wast so mighty? Honour and fame attended thy command; and by thy breath the wretch who had offended was blasted to ruin. Where are thine honours now; and where the ministers of thy will? Silent thy dwelling! thou whose princely deportment claimed respect from the peasant kind; and, without the pomp of royalty, would have proclaimed thee King.

These ideas affected me so much, I shut myself up in my apartment, and feasted upon wo. After a decent time I waited on the Queen. She appeared

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peared like a flower defaced by a storm. But as the deepest waters flow most smooth, her grief did not rush in a torrent ; but, like mild showers in a summer's eve, the trickling tear adorned the cheek it bedewed.

She informed me of her going to leave the court, and shut herself up in a famous edifice she had erected for the education of those females whose least excellence was the gifts of fortune.— You are too wise, worthy Rutha, said she with a sigh, to wish me to stay where the shadow of faded royalty will be eclipsed by the rising splendor of the new. The cold civility of the King persuades me my exit will occasion no sorrow ; and the Queen never loved me in her heart, though she concealed her sentiments from the late King. Diffimulation was ever a stranger to my heart ; though long an inmate of a court, I have happily escaped that contagion. Nothing then can here solicit my stay, or engage my attention. I go to enjoy the sweets of retirement, with the high feast of an approving conscience, which gives a foretaste of those joys that await the just. She wept as she spoke these words. I bore her company ; and next morning, by break of day, I attended her to the charming retreat ; where I hope she will end with dignity a life of spotless fame.

I was at the coronation of the King, which was conducted with great eclat. When I beheld

held the Royal pair upon the throne, they fell in majesty so far behind those whose places they then filled, that the comparison threw them into a shade. The King is dark and swarthy, and to a stranger would need to be on the throne before he could be recognised a king. The Queen, too, is unamiable in her mien and manners, but piques herself upon her acquired talents. — It must have been envy at superior excellence that made her dislike the late Queen.

Soon as the pomp subsided, I waited on the King, to congratulate his accession to the throne ; but told him, I meant to retire, and spend the rest of my days in peace. He frowned at the motion, and said, he had numbered me amongst his ablest counsellors, whose wisdom might guide him to safety in times of peril.

Great Sire, said I, may Heaven guide you to the counsels of peace, and prosper your Majesty's lawful sway. I have served the late King with fidelity and truth, and find life's journey drawing to a close. What remains is too short to fit my soul for death, and those glorious views which lie beyond its reach. He consented at last ; but hoped I would often attend his levee.

Eased of the trouble attending a court-life, I turned my steps to the bower of Gelin. Drawing near Carria, I heard the ambitious Leonardo had lodged in the house of his friend ; but peace had

been a stranger to his breast ; Disease had spread her pale banner over his head, and Death at last put a period to his wo.

Ruin hovered over his friend ; and he fell a victim of the tool of injustice. O injured Otho ! the flames that rage set to your dwelling, ascended to Heaven, and brought its vengeance on their heads. Their race are swept out of Carria as a whirlwind drives the locusts away. They were like a blast in the desert, which is once heard to hum, then quickly mingles with common sounds.

I went to the house of Gelin ; but how shall I give a picturesque view of what I beheld ? The hand of Industry had adorned the bower, and turned the pompous buildings of the great into scorn. Zila ! charming Zila ! like Beauty's queen, received me with so gracious a smile, I fancied myself in the presence of some celestial nymph, whom the hands of the graces had formed complete. Her address was insinuating as her form was fair, and the music of her soft voice irresistibly charmed my soul. Three children, like playful fawns, fresh as the rosy morn, finished the delightful piece. They flocked about me with joy, embracing my knees with their infantine caresses. There is a charm in innocence beyond the studied language of art ; the sweet prattlers raised a pulsation in my heart, bordering upon rapture.

I found it a difficult task to persuade Zila to  
part

part with her dear Gelin. So blest were they in each other, she viewed his absence as the greatest evil. At last I pushed him away, and we crossed the heath. In three days we beheld the lofty mountains of Lubar, which raised a conflict of warring passions into Gelin's heart. As we came to the brow of the hill, a fine opening appeared below, interspersed with wood, charming groves, and winding streams. We beheld the high turrets of Lord Arco's towers. Noble Rutha, said Gelin, how shall I appear before Lord Arco? how vindicate my flight and long seclusion with his only child from his view? So good, so kind a father! and he burst into tears.

Stay without, said I, thou child of terror, whilst I go on, and smoothe your entry. He agreed; and I went to the gate. I knocked hard; and a venerable person made his appearance. I demanded admittance to Lord Arco. Worthy stranger, said he, distant must your dwelling be, or you would know Lord Arco is not to be seen. Silence dwells in his halls, where late the voice of music charmed the listening peasant as he passed. He often beats his aged breast, and cries, My children, oh! my children! ye are lost. Nor dare I introduce a single guest, lest I should never see my master more.

I come, thou faithful servant! I replied; I come with news will give Lord Arco peace. I come to banish solitude and care, and raise the voice



voice of music in your halls : only admit me where  
your master sits ; on my devoted head rest all the  
blame.

Blessed be thy steps, O messenger of peace !  
make good your words, and Heaven shall bless thee  
for the deed. Follow me, and I will show you  
where the mourner lies ; he who was so mighty  
before, a prey to melancholy and wo. We a-  
scended a lofty stair-case. The pictures which  
adorned the walls, denoted the ancient splendor  
of his house.

At the end of a long gallery, a half-opened  
door gave a glimpse of the disconsolate mourner.  
The servant left me ; and I softly moved to the door.  
I beheld Lord Arco at the corner of a sumptuous  
apartment, lined with black velvet ; the windows  
shut ; two mournful tapers, whose pale gleam  
threw a solemnity over the awful scene.

He lay on a sofa, with his beard grown long.  
Since Sorrow had preyed on his heart, he had ne-  
glected all show or dress. This sad object so  
melted my heart, that a big sigh escaped me un-  
awares, which drew the attention of my Lord.  
He started from his seat, and my form stood re-  
vealed to his view. But as a wretch immured in a  
desert feels a sudden emotion on seeing a mortal  
form, so eager and inquisitive gazed Lord Arco.

Pardon my rash intrusion, said I, most gra-  
cious

cious Lord. Bewildered in my way, and faint with Hunger's invincible call, I entered your hospitable roof Give me some bread and wine to restore my exhausted powers; and may he whose lavish hand has scattered such plenty on your head, amply increase your stores.

Never did the hungry go empty from my door, said he with a heaving sigh! Though Calamity has spread her shield over my head, and sorrow usurped the place of joy, my heart is not callous to the sigh of distress; and to the weary stranger I can afford an asylum of peace.

He rung; and ordered the servant to cover a table, of which he did the honours himself with so fine a grace, I was forced to admire his noble mien. He resembled a tree whose branches had been lopped by adverse winds, but whose lofty trunk stood superior to every blast.

I observed two pictures which I knew to be Gelin and Zila; on which I fixed my eye with an attentive gaze. What seest thou, O stranger! said he, in these figures, that thus thou eyeest them with attention? Because, said I, I love the originals, and have them selected in the number of my friends.

Delusive blifs! said he; seducing Hope! no longer canst thou fascinate my heart. They are lost.

lost. My children are dead; nor shall their hap-  
less father ere behold them.

I no more wonder, my Lord, said I, 'at this  
outward show of grief; since it but too well ac-  
cords with your inward anguish. Make mine ear  
acquainted with your wo; perhaps I am sent by  
Heaven to make it fly.

These, then, O stranger! are the pictures of  
two hapless lovers, whom the hand of tyranny  
meant to sever; but their souls were inseparably  
united by Heaven, and they fled from the cruel  
blow. My wife, whose violence made them fly,  
did not long survive their loss. I have searched  
after them every where in vain. Death must have  
snatched them away, else they would ere now  
have thrown themselves at my feet. This occa-  
sions the sorrow you behold. Their loss has broke  
my heart, and made me loath the world.

Sure, said I, this is Gelin and Zila I behold.—  
Zila, said he, starting up, O thou blessed of Hea-  
ven! dost thou know Zila? Thy form is above  
deceit, and truth must dwell in thine heart.

I know them both, my Lord, said I: they are  
well and happy. Love hath supplied the gifts of  
Fortune; and three smiling infants wait to throw  
themselves at your feet. But couldst thou forgive  
their perverse hearts, which have so long by their  
flight given pain to thine?

Where

Where shall I find those hapless fugitives? said he with eagerness. I long to press my children to my heart, to bless them ere I bid the world adieu. O pardon them, then, cried Gelin, rushing in: pardon a wretched criminal who pleads guilty. He threw himself at his feet. As one newly awaked from a dream, knows not whether it is vision or reality, so gazed Lord Arco, doubting the whole deceit: but finding his knees grasped by Gelin, he fell on his neck, crying, O Gelin! art thou restored;—O my long-lost son: and he fainted away.

The servant who introduced me, wept for joy; but ran to the assistance of his lord; who soon revived, and happiness again sparkled on his venerable brow. He ordered the bath to be prepared, and dressed himself in splendid robes. The great hall was illuminated; and he regaled us with a sumptuous feast. The news spread from place to place, as the meteor darts along the vale. Lord Arco was dearly beloved, and his felicity gave universal joy.

But Zila was yet unseen. I knew her anxious soul would tremble for Gelin's safety; nor could Lord Arco brook any longer delay: he ordered the chariot, and we all three set out for Carria.

Zila met us at the door. When she beheld her father, she shrieked aloud, and fell to the ground. Gelin sprung, and raised her in his arms. When

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she

she recovered, she flew to Lord Arco, and threw herself on his neck, crying, O my father! canst thou forgive thy perverse child, who so cruelly left thine age a prey to wo? He pressed her to his breast, and bedewed her face with his tears.—Ah! Zila, said he, it was not well. Thy flight has almost broke my heart with sorrow: but weep not, my child, for that is over. Alas! I fear the meagre form of Want has amply punished your folly.

At this Zila, in the fullness of her heart, disclosed their misery to his ear,—Gelin's rage, and Otho's generous gift. So feelingly she swelled the tale of wo, Lord Arco's noble heart burst into tears.

O Providence! he cried, thy ways are intricate! Thou leadeſt thy votaries through perplexing paths! Thou makeſt a ſcorpion of their wayward paſſions, to ſcourge them back to wiſdom, peace, and virtue! Bleſſed be the rod when thus it proves a cure.

With ſuch diſcourſe the evening ſtole away: and next day I left them with regret. The conflict of warring paſſions ſo affected Lord Arco, he was obliged to keep his bed; but as ſoon as he is compoſed, they all meant to viſit Otho and the Hermit; and let their grateful feelings glow with rapture.

HERMIT.



## HERMIT.

I long to behold so worthy a groupe. Lord Arco's soul is generous and mild, as the face of Heaven, when the silver Queen of Night serenely rolls through the sky, amidst ten thousand sparkling gems. But Virtue is not exempted from feeling the stings of Sorrow. To those who patiently receive the blow, the hope of recompence is fixed and sure. Those rewards are too sublime to be found below, where all fluctuates like the waters. The order of the Most High must not be infringed, nor divine pleasures anticipated below. It would take off the keen edge of our ardour, and render virtue of no use.— Came you in by the court, my Lord; and how fares the young King?

## RUTHA.

The court, O Hermit! confirms your maxims, That nothing is fixed in this fleeting world. Gusto perceived the King's cold looks, and wisely demanded leave to retire. It was granted; and his memory is almost defaced, as the ocean's rapid waves wash away the sand that beautifies the shore.

Mortifying picture of human greatness; whilst the arm of power compels respect, the breath of Adulation hails him from the croud. Reverse the scene: Those fawning sycophants soon turn aside, and mock with cold contempt the man they worshipped.

The King has assumed a serious form ; has banished all rudeness from court ; begins and ends the day with praising his maker ; and nothing but order dares appear in his view.

Two priests take the charge of that sacred office. Every servant must be, or appear, devout : Decency and Order stand centinels at his gate.

Let us rejoice, Otho, that we are calm, removed far from all that crafty zeal, where, with our godlike Hermit, we devote our time to Contemplation, Truth, and Virtue.

Thus said Rutha ; and the Hermit departed. Otho adored Heaven for giving him such precious blessings below ; and went to rest, with a heart tuned to Harmony and Peace.

## C H A P. VIII.

**T**UNE your golden harps! ye seraphs on high,  
 whose office in heaven is harmony and love.  
 The celestial sounds will descend to earth, and  
 humanize each rude passion in the soul, till the  
 melting eye of Pity subdue the heart of Pride,  
 by viewing calamities varied round, that oft assails  
 the virtuous and good. Let the self-secure be  
 humbled in the dust; the child of Misfortune look  
 up and hope; for he that holdeth the heavens in  
 a balance, and views at once each mortal event,  
 can turn the mourner's tears into joy, and level the  
 proud with the insects of the ground.

Abstracted from the cares of earth, the Hermit's  
 noblest views are fixed on heaven. As age bows  
 down his mortal frame, he feels his intellectual  
 vigour grow: and as a peasant toiling beneath  
 the mid-day sun, exults with joy at the approach  
 of eve, he viewed his release from humanity with  
 triumph, by the sacred hope of entering into no-  
 bler being.

One evening he beheld Rutha approach, with  
 Sadness clouding his brow. He accosted him in  
 Friendship's soothing form, demanding the cause  
 of his wo.

RUTHA.

## RUTHA.

O Hermit ! I weep for my friend ! for Otho I lift the voice of wo. A stream of misfortune has again overflowed his head, and well-nigh swept every comfort away. — Why did his unsuspecting heart sign the fatal bond, and trust for redress to royal promise ? For sooner may we trace the mariner's course on the waves, or the path of a timid hare flying from her foes, than note the courtier's verbal promise, or raise sanguine hopes on the favour of kings. For when the pitch of respect seems high, and the heart resigns itself to the blaze of power, like a traveller in a pleasant vale suddenly sinking in quagmires unseen, — so from a towering eminence he falls down a huge precipice to rise no more.

Demophontes, whose death put a stop to lawful redress, had a son of the Belial race. Vice, in her ruggedest form, wasted his fortune. He skulked like a felon in the dark, lest the horrors of a jail had finished his wretched course.

In searching through the papers of his hapless fire, he found the fatal bond ; and though sure of gaining no redress to himself, consigned it over to two harpies of the law, to whom his extravagance owed a sum. Eager to gain the prize in view, they moved a suit against Otho. — Those whose information could have availed his cause, slept in the dust. Ullin alone remained,  
who

who best could plead. But Ullin, the upstart Ullin, forgot his benefactor ;—a courtier disgraced was below his regard. Though Otho's credit had raised him from obscurity, in the season of adversity he knew him not. None to plead with truth and zeal, the law devoted him to ruin. From its sanction fell Destruction issued, whose sharp scythe, without remorse, swept off what Industry had formed complete.

The unfeeling crew swarmed round his house :—around the sacred head of him, who, erewhile, could have awed the proudest of them into submission.

Grief melted my heart at his unmerited sufferings. I went to console him with sincere affection. —But how shall I paint the scene ? Ruin glared through his house ;—but Peace, angelic Peace, shone in each face, which lent to sad Calamity a charm, and threw a veil on proud Prosperity ; and, spite of Nature shrinking from distress, allured the heart to woe.

This is too much, said I, my friend. The King, whose justice Fame so loudly sounds, must doubtless redress such uncommon wrongs.

Ah ! Rutha, said he, vain is that confidence. As a rock, in ocean's storm, remains unmoved when the proud waves dash its sides ;—so silently he



he mocks our attacks, sits too high to feel my wo.

Alas ! Otho, said I, has Sensibility forfok the world ? How shall mine eyes avoid the hateful view of yon fell spoilers, most of whom have feasted at your board ! Ah ! me, the ancient hospitable ties that ruled so forcibly on generous minds, are here dissolved in air. Fain would I tax them with their impious deeds, but Indignation stops my faltering tongue.

O Rutha ! said he, all are not alike. Behold Argentes, the physician, to whom I owed by far the largest sum, whose noble conduct must delight your heart, deface the image of the inglorious crew ;—like Heaven's directed messenger he came, and stopped the dreadful rigour which was meant ; cut short Oppression in her stern career.

See ! how he turns to hide the falling tear ; lest I perceive how much he feels my wo. Exalted man ! may Heaven shed choicest blessings on his head ; may Virtue, Peace, Prosperity, and Health, adorn his race ; nor let the pang of sad Calamity e'er touch his heart. And sure the fervent prayer of one like me must penetrate the throne of Heaven above.

Angels accelerate its flight, said I ;—and may Success his every action crown, and pale Disease from his presence fly. The man who gives re-

lief

rief to worth oppressed, becomes the agent of the heavenly powers : his soul for ever feels a placid joy, a godlike glow, unknown to vicious minds.

I must go to the King, my friend, I said ; I must disclose the truth to his ear, that Justice may remove the evils you endure, and blot disgrace from the throne.

I went to court, and quickly got audience of the King. I uttered my moving tale, and spoke of Otho's sufferings with warmth. He arose displeased ; and said, he was tired of the name of Otho : That his cause was too intricate for his penetration ; and begged he might hear it no more.

To whom can Otho apply for redress, said I, but to your Majesty ? It was Agendemon, of gracious memory, that made him sign that bond : — And had he beheld him oppressed with its bad effects, he must, he would, have given him relief.

You are too bold, my Lord, said the King, his brow knit into rage ; I will hear no more. — Did not the late King exalt him to honours beyond his due, till he wantonly pulled disgrace on his own head, and now justly merits his wo ? Should Heaven's deputy, in sacred trust, squander those treasures which the just should share, the angry powers above might frown upon me.

T

Indignation

Indignation filled my heart at his blindness to view the truth ; but lest I had uttered the word of irreverence, I bowed low, and retired.

I found the King's sanctity reached no further than formal show. His heart was callous to those divine feelings which kindle a glow of philanthropy in the soul, and prompt it to relieve the pain of woe.

O Religion ! how often is thy sacred name assumed by Hypocrisy, and formed into a large cloak, which conceals the rankest enormities from view !

I had placed my son in the college at Hygeiaolis, and went to visit him, ere I returned, to mark his progress in learning, lest paternal fondness might prove his bane, and place him in a line his genius disdained. But, my mind full of Othello's sufferings, I heedless lost my way. Starless, without a guide, I knew not where to turn, till a ray of light produced hope. I advanced towards the mansion with cautious steps ; beheld an antique mansion, with a porch in the centre. Harmonious music from within produced a sensation little different from joy.

I knocked hard. A servant appeared, and instantly threw open the gates. I told him, I was bewildered in the dark, and begged an asylum for the day.

It proved to be the house of Philocles, Otho's son by Vanessa, whom Elpenor had placed beyond the mountains, and made him in his boyish years commit undutiful actions against his fire, which sunk him in my esteem, and made my joy on entering less lively. But on seeing his face, my prejudice fled away. That open undisguised look, the candour, truth, and honour of Otho, shone through the whole; and I blest the generous youth.

There are distinguished qualities in elevated souls, which quickly banish reserve, and produce that convivial joy known only to few. I related the various sufferings of Otho, whilst his feeling heart melted into tears.

Oh Heavens! he cried, rising from his seat, have I tasted ease and festivity, whilst Oppression's iron edge has crushed my father's head! — Fatal Discord's envenomed sting that rankled Elpenor's heart, and ruthless was his rage, to inflame the children against their fire.

Noble Rutha! me with scorn you must have viewed, who, blessed with power and affluence, have stood an idle gazer on his wo. But, witness for me, all ye powers above, sweet Happiness forever fled my reach. My filial principles, basely restrained, left a distressful void within my soul. My friends, upon Elpenor's side, combined with the envenomed breath of Malice, to fix my stings;

till tired of jargon, low and virulent, I shunned with care their groveling path, as one would do a pestilential region, where harpies vile and noxious dwell.

Had the cruel wrath of Elpenor, said I, been founded on truth, as it was false as the breath of Slander, his grafting it on your infant heart was a diabolical and fiend-like practice; to plant infernal ire where sacred principles of filial love and union, the support of states and families, should have sprung. But all this hate against such worth as Otho's, such excellence of heart as touches the simplicity of childhood, was such a breach against the laws of Heaven, as makes the good and just with one accord, abhor, and almost execrate his name.

Contending passions ruffled his soul. I shifted the discourse, and the treasure of Philosophy flowed from his tongue. We traced periods that are fled and glowed at the bravery of heroes departed. He proposed to attend me to the house of Otho and next morning we crossed the mountains with alacrity and joy. Approaching near his house a mournful silence presaged woe. I found Alexander the darling son of Otho, lay dead: the toil he endured assisting his father cut short a life of matchless excellence.

Leaving Philocles below, I went in quest of my friend, and found him alone by the taper's light.



gleam, and heard him utter this soliloquy over the corpse of his much-loved son.

Thou silent monitor ! what an emphatic teacher art thou to Otho ? Where now soars thy spirit ? Freed from mortal shackles, and glowing with eternal gratitude and praise, dost thou view with surprise thy precious dust ? Ah ! how cold, silent for ever thy once-animated clay !

I interrupted him, and he clasped me fast. We gazed in silence, and dropt the mutual tear. I told him, Philocles waited below. He hastened to see him, and fell on his neck.

Oh ! my father ! said he, forgive this seeming neglect of your wo. When adverse billows flowed over your head, my odious conduct must have sharpened the edge of your sorrows.

My heart at present participates in your laudable grief, though tears cannot recall the virtuous youth ; nor would he, blessed in tranquil regions, obey the selfish summons. Let harmony henceforth rule our souls, till the memory of the past be defaced, for ever plunged into Oblivion's quiet stream.

Such a pleasant union was balm to Otho's heart. They paid the last sad office to Alexis's dust ; and a happy intercourse ever after took place betwixt the father and the son.

Soon

Soon after this I went to court, where the King's death filled my heart with unfeigned sorrow. He went a-hunting, with his chief nobility, to the forest of Aphania ; where he was suddenly thrown from his horse, and killed on the spot. His attendants were struck dumb with astonishment and grief at so unexpected a misfortune, and mourned over the Royal corpse with many tears.

Striking emblem of human infelicity ; emphatic caution to the lofty soul ; as the arrows of Death pay no respect, but level at once the mighty and the low.

Consternation filled all the court. A thousand reflections arose in every heart, as if the caution of the King's guards ought certainly to have warded from the kingdom so deplorable a blow. But evils fall out in the distribution of things below, which puzzle human wisdom ; nor must we attempt, whilst in this world, to account for events placed by the Most High beyond our finite view.

I wept at the sad fate of a prince, in the service of whose house my prime of life had been spent. Reflection quickly whispered in mine ear, Oh ! had he given relief to injured Otho, Heaven would in mercy have blessed him for the deed. But that is past. Alas ! the proud monarch now is reduced to breathless clay.

With

With these sad cogitations I crossed the mountains ; and having once more marked the progress of my son, I went to the castle of Philocles. But, oh Hermit ! how shall I recount the sad change ? He lay on a sofa, pale and meagre ; his manly form reduced to a skeleton ; the lustre of his eyes faded, and fixed on the ground. He received me with that warm glow which marks the hospitable soul ; and though grieved at the strange reverse, I partook of his politeness with appearing joy.

You must perceive, my Lord, said he, that I am but the shadow of myself. My youth decays apace, as the lightnings blast a fair tree, whose branches never more shall grow. I hasten to the gloomy dwelling of the dead, where sleeps in equal quiet the monarch and village-swain. But there fraud and villany cannot penetrate ; nor deceit assume the form of love ; and, like the adder's envenomed bite, leave a mortal sting.

Love my memory, said he, my Lord, seizing my hand with emotion ; and when I am low in the dust, mention me with friendship. For though I fall the victim of concerted guile, and have become the dupe of artifice, Heaven will punish with remorse the authors of my wo, and make the stings of conscience gnaw their souls.

The wicked are permitted to scourge us below. Though less culpable than unfortunate, I have  
failed

failed in filial duty; have therefore plunged into guileful snares.

O Elpenor! great was thy transgression, and direful was its effects on Otho's race. The flaming torch of Dissension kindled a rage which has blasted their fame and renown; but long ere now hast thou answered before that dread tribunal where I must likewise quickly appear. But Heaven I hope before that period moistened thine eyes with tears of Penitence, and snatched thee with the arm of Mercy.

Oh! how I blame his artful widow, who, by specious pretensions of friendship, seduced me into a sad breach of natural affection! Inheriting her husband's inhuman rage against the noble author of my birth; under that lofty pretence, her aim was to scatter destruction over his race.

Alas! she was herself unfruitful as the barren top of a rugged hill, and never knew the yearnings of a parent's heart. But had she consulted the laws of God, she never could have urged the son to rebel against his sire. But when my immature end reaches her ear, may self-accusation produce sincere contrition, and Heaven sweep her fatal errors away.

I burst into tears at his dismal discourse; though I tried to console and soothe him into an oblivion of these evils, which had not been the effect of his choice.

choice. His character rose upon me at each interview; and I left him with sorrowful presages of the worst.

Worthy, though ill-fated youth! how has infernal Discord eclipsed his merit, and dashed the cup of joy from his touch?

Upon visiting Otho, I found Death had snatched another son from his arms, whose form brought a seraph to view, and whose tuneful soul was fit to join some select choir in heaven; for Genius early came, æthereal guest! and marked him for eminence below. But, ah! how vain is human confidence? presumptuous is the man who boasts of aught the awful tyrant Death can ever claim.

I assisted my friend in laying the sacred remains in earth; nor could resist this bursting exclamation:

O Death! that to the aged and infirm so long denies thy salutary blow, how couldst thou nip this beauteous rose of May! how shut up within the grave's damp vault such elegance of form, that lovely lay, and smiled in defiance of thy power!

I was visited by Lord Arco and Gelin; who hearing of Otho's disasters, delayed going to the bower till Time had smoothed the edge of his wo.

U

But



But evils come not single. I heard this morning, that a high fever had carried Philocles to the grave, and that Otho was tearing his aged locks.

## HERMIT.

A thick mysterious veil conceals from mortal ken the wondrous counsels of the Lord of Heaven; nor, while this mortal vesture dims our view, can we discern that fair harmonious chain that links events, and regulates with such amazing skill the varied plans of Providence below.

But let us, Rutha, by to-morrow's dawn, fly and console such complicated sorrow; there, in the unison of sacred friendship, raise our sad notes in concert to his wo.

## C H A P. IX.

**D**escend, Melpomene, thou plaintive Muse !  
 come in a robe of sable hue, with cypress  
 mournful night-shade ; accord in sadly-swelling  
 notes to Otho's wo, till that dumb goading an-  
 guish of his soul dissolve in tears, and calm Reli-  
 gion, in an angel's form, smile through the drea-  
 ry gloom, and soothe his heart-felt passions into  
 peace.

Sad he sits on the cold heath ; his aged locks  
 are the sport of the breeze. The Hermit and Ru-  
 tha approached slow, accompanied with a youth  
 in a warrior's garb ; and sacred Sympathy's divine  
 impulse suffused with pearly drops each glistening  
 eye.

## HERMIT.

Why shivers Otho beneath the shadeless oak ?  
 The ground is strewed with leaves that once look-  
 ed fair to the eye. The starting tears betray your  
 inward wo ; whilst, careless of the bitter storm,  
 your age is exposed to its blast.

## OTHO.

Sad, O Hermit ! is the soul of your friend.  
 Affliction's sharpest blast has blown my peace away.

Those sons whose blooming youth rejoiced mine age, are silent in the tomb. No more shall I view them stately on the hills, whilst the deer dreaded their fleet hounds.

Alonzo yet remains in distant lands; but far from heeding the anguish of his fire. When shall the sound of his feet rejoice mine ear, whilst bright in the blossoms of his fame he enters my deserted halls.

HERMIT.

Thy cup, most noble Otho, has flowed in mingled streams. The fair beams of joy have gilded your brow; whilst Sorrow, like a stormy blast, veiled at once all happiness from your view. Yet Heaven, indulgent to man's state below, sent Hope to banish sad Despair. And should Adversity still make you bleed, let Hope dart forward to those peaceful climes where stable happiness repays our pain, and turns those transient evils we lament to salutary steps to speed our flight.

Here is a youth we found in the vale. He brings you tidings of your absent son.

OTHO.

Come, blessed youth! sweet harbinger of my son: your lips shall bless mine ear with his fame, till the flying hours bring his form to my view. — But, ha! what mean those tears? why trembles thus your frame? If thou sayest my son is

no

no more, thou art the messenger of death to Otho.

Pierced with the burden of his dismal tale, Alphonso stood aghast. His swoln heart dissolved into tears ; whilst sad Uncertainty, with horrid dread, tore with a furious pang the heart of Otho, till thus the youth confirmed the sad presage.

Exert your fortitude, most noble Otho ; your heart inured to feel repeated wo, must rise superior now to common grief, or sink at Fate's inevitable blow.

I come, the messenger of Dear Alonzo, to soothe the bitterness my news imparts ; to tell how Fame attended all his steps. That charm was his, which, like a glory round his head, made every action gain him high renown. Though Death has snatched him from mortal view, his great, his noble deeds will never die.

Alas ! cried Otho with a loud groan, and is Alonzo dead ? Are all my air-built notions low in dust ? Voracious Death ! how couldst thou mar so fair a field of joy ? How, in a foreign clime, couldst thou attack, and make fair Fame, and Youth, and Bloom your prey ?

Otho's grief approached the bower. Sabina's ear caught the sad tale ; and, heedless of her venerable guests, rent the yielding air with her wo.

Oh!

Oh ! Alonzo ! she cried, has Death for ever snatched thee from my view ? — Nipt in thy spring of life, and from thy opening honours cruelly torn ! When Expectation raised hope to view thy native land, and kindred dear, unfeeling Death mocked those ecstatic joys, blasted thy form, and laid thee in the tomb.

Alas ! no friend was nigh to chear thy parting soul with views of heaven ; to close thine eyes, bewail thy youth, and shed a mournful tribute o'er thy tomb. Oh Alonzo ! Oh ! my much-loved son !

RINALDO.

Thou sad complainer ! chase such thoughts away, nor mingle them with juster cause of wo : for who could know Alonzo's matchless worth, and cease to mourn that destiny severe which laid him low ? With martial honours, all the plaintive pomp of warlike dignity, he was interred. A sacred spot, by trees incircled round, appeared to view, where his remains by strangers were inurned. Blessed spot ! may rose and myrtle round it spring, and one unfading blossom ever bloom. Oh ! may his sacred ashes rest secure ; sleep undisturbed till the last trumpet blow.

In Friendship's noble bonds our hearts were knit. When dying, with his hand he grasped mine. Oh ! stop, my friend, he cried, those falling tears ; they touch my heart, which Death must quickly break.



break. When you revisit your native land; let Otho know of my death; but soften the recital of the sad tale, lest his aged heart burst at the blow.

But another task claims your acceptance. Go to the daughter of Rutha, to Alzira, that peerless maid; give her this picture of your friend, set with the pearls of the east; say, that Alonzo's last thoughts were fixed on her; and if souls departed retain an idea of what passed below, Alonzo's spirit will guard from harm her spotless mind.

Daughter of Rutha! thou hast cause to sigh. Alas! who would not mourn that knew the youth? who would not weep till tears refused to flow?

Seven days they sat by Otho, who lay on the ground, in dumb sorrow; on the eighth the Hermit thus addressed him:

Enough to Nature, Otho, hast thou paid. Let Reason and Religion now bear sway. Deaf is the ear of the dead; nor can your sighs penetrate the grave. Resume your fortitude, and be a man. Shall the patience that resisted human violence, now prove rebellious to the Lord of heaven?

OTHO.

Blessed be thy voice, O worthy Hermit! oft has

has it chased despair from my soul. I will resume myself, though I must disclaim the Stoic's pride; nor aim at cold Philosophy's stern power, whose highest glory is, to mould man's heart till it become unfeeling as a stone. Though Reason and Religion acquiesce, and whisper those I mourn are safe beyond the toil, the vanity, of human life; still feeble Nature claims a right to sigh.

A dream from Heaven had calmed Sabina's mind. She joined his two friends, and mildly urged him to rise. He suffered the bath to be prepared, and again gave the feast of joy.

Rutha beheld Lord Arco at a distance; Gelin and Zila, with the infant-train, approached the bower. He received them with the warmth of affection; presented them to his friends, on whose hearts their worth had long ere that time fixed a lasting empire.

The glow of rapture which beamed on each eye, rendered their reception a voluptuous scene. Lord Arco acknowledged his gratitude to Otho in the warmest style. Gelin and Zila eyed him as a superior being, to whom the warmest praise was due.—As a father who long had mourned his childrens absence, whom necessity had driven to distant climes, sees them restored to his view, and gives his aged heart a loose to joy, such emotions sprung in the Hermit's soul. He gazed

gazed with joy on so lovely a groupe, and felt a sympathetic tear dim his venerable eye.

Zila, fair Zila, like Beauty's Queen, unconscious of her charms, approaching Otho with reverential awe, yet softened by the mildness of his look, her smile made them guess the seraph's rapture. She forced him to praise the heavenly powers, who with such glory blessed his chequered life, as once to have had the great, the godlike power of blessing excellence and worth like hers.

Thus happy were the noble guests. Friendship, Admiration, and Love, erected a stable empire in every heart. Otho forgot his wo, and gave up his heart to joy; when thus the Hermit addressed Lord Arco.

Forgive, my Noble Lord, my bold request, if I should wish to hear the birth of Gelin. First when his plaintive tale approached mine ear, my heart insensibly absolved his crime: his virtue, carried to the extremest point, plunged him into the dismal line of Vice.

Lord ARCO.

Illustrious Hermit! what canst thou, or any of these venerable friends, demand, that would not burst from my indebted lips to give you joy?

Hear then a tale as yet hid from the youth, and which I now disclose to sacred Friendship.

X

When:

When Hymen's blissful bond conveyed the dear Virginia to my arms, happiness and joy forsook their Halcyon groves, and centered in my breast: but Lucina frowned on our union, jealous of such felicity. Years rolled away, and no pledge to crown our bliss. My fondness was unabated; but Virginia grew pensive, shunned society, and sought the lonely wild, whilst her weeping eye announced her inward woe. Alarmed at so sad a change, to divert her chagrin I carried her to a seat I possess on the borders of the Cyonian sea.

One day, whilst airing on the sands, a storm forced us to take shelter in an adjoining wood, whose thick foliage screened us from elemental wrath. A gang of gypsies were seated near, indulging themselves in all the luxury of life. The roar of unmixed mirth resounded through the wood; when, in midst of their festivity, the officers of the law put a stop to the mirthful scene. Some were taken by surprise; others fled away, and found security in their swiftness from the fangs of Justice.

When the noise subsided, I advanced to behold the scene; when a smiling infant moved towards me with a tearful eye, like the rays of the sun in a storm, and might have softened adamant. — I flew to its relief; when holding out its lovely hand, and grasping my finger, that I yet feel the divine pulsation, which seized my heart with more than

than parental fondness, I pressed the sweet child to my breast, whilst his tender heart, alarmed by fear, eased itself by sobbing aloud. I soothed the lovely babe, demanding who were his parents; but looking with his eloquent eyes in my face, could repeat nothing but *Gelin, Gelin*.

It was thus, O Gelin! Heaven first threw you on my care:—and since, the powers above can evince, I have treated you with a parent's fondness.

No clown felling timber to purchase his daily fare, finding by chance a pearl that sets him at once above necessity, could hug it more close to his breast than I did this lovely babe. I carried him to Virginia; who caught him in her arms; and the sweet prattler hid his head in her bosom.

This child, said I, has been stole by those gypsies; let us try to restore him to his parents; if that fail, we will adopt him for our own. This last thought made a placid smile spread over her features: she bedewed his infant-face with her tender tears.

We put him in the carriage, and drove home, leaving a servant to observe if any came to search after him, with orders to bring them to my presence. Some hours after a woman arrived, who filled the air with her cries; wildly demanding Gelin from every bush and tree. He brought her



to my presence by delusive hopes of finding the child.

I asked if the infant she searched after was her own? To which she answered, Yes; but truth did not correspond with her tale. I clothed my visage with terror, and sternly adjured her to reveal the mystery, as she valued life. Her eyes avoided the gaze of inspection, and let them fall to the ground.

How, wretch! said I, raising my tone, couldst thou tear so sweet a lamb from his native fold, and leave it to devouring wolves a prey? Art thou not afraid of Heaven's anger falling on thy guilty head? — She thought he had been dead, and burst into tears. O angelic Innocence! she cried, art thou then dead! thou whom I loved with a mother's fondness! She roared like a tiger deprived of her young; and gave me at last the truth in these words.

Must a wretch like me detain your noble ear, and past errors be punished with appearing guilt? Truth will make me less vile.

Though now in the gypsy line, my infant days were nursed with affection; till Love led my steps astray, and Fancy perverted reason and advice. I married a youth whom my heart approved; for which my friends saw me no more. By a train of youthful follies our money fled away. After  
many

many unsuccessful schemes, my husband joined the gypsy gang ; and though my soul abhorred their plan of life, I loved him too well to stay behind.

Two months since, passing by this place, a thick wood sheltered us by day, whilst plunder employed us by night. One day, passing by a fisherman's mean hut, I spied a sweet boy, who ran toward me. My heart beat with rapture ; and some demon whispered me to carry him off : no person appeared to retard my flight. I received a loud applause from the gang, who hoped to share with me so rich a prize. At first I meant to sell him to advantage. But at last my heart was so glued to the babe, that I resisted all offers, resolving to adopt him for my own. When revelling to-day in the woods, my husband had the child in his arms, we fled at the approach of Justice, I saw him fly away with the boy ; and trusting to the swiftness of my feet, got away. On finding my husband without the infant, I eagerly demanded where he was. He said, he had dropt him in the wood, lest he had been caught. I then cursed him in the bitterness of my heart ; and, heedless of danger, I flew back, and searched all the woods in vain.

Alas ! some wild beast has torn my lovely infant ! At this she burst into all the fury of desperate wo. The child by accident came into the parlour ; and instantly she passed from the extreme of grief to the wild extravagance of joy. Such a whirl

whirl of warring passions hurt her senses ; she fainted away. Gelin knew her at once ; and running forward, with a look of pity implored my aid. She recovered, and prest the child to her breast.

Hapless woman ! said I, renounce for ever the paths of vice, reclaim your husband, and I will give you the comforts of life : ill suited to your native taste are such ignoble ways. But go with my servant, inquire out the parents of this child ; let your own feelings teach you their wo.

They went, but fruitless was their search : the fisherman disappeared at that instant, and could not be found. When her husband appeared, a look of modesty was painted on his brow : I found him more unfortunate than wicked, and made him ruler over my ground ; and have alternately rejoiced at their progress in virtue, and shunning with care each inlet to vice. This was some years before the birth of Zila ; and as we resolved to adopt him for our own, I appointed each servant I had with me a residence on the spot, that the secret of his birth might never be known.

The gypsy gave me a picture which hung at the child's breast, hoping it would one day explain the mystery of his birth. He then pulled out a little case, and displayed it to his guests : — it was the portrait of a beautiful woman, richly set with the pearls of the East.

The

The Hermit viewed it with an attentive gaze. He rose with emotion; his eyes sparkling uncommon fire, — exclaimed aloud, Myſterious Providence! with what alluſion doſt thou mock mine age? or do I view the image of Uſebia? Dear Uſebia, whither again wouldſt thou turn my thoughts? He ſtraightway uncovered the neck of Gelin; and, finding the well-known mark, claſped him in his arms, crying, O Alranchid! my ſon! my ſon!

Had a lofty mountain flown at once to the ſea, and left in its place a barren vale, it could ſcarce have produced more ſurpriſe: — A ſilence, more emphatic than any language, enſued, till Gelin thus began.

Gracious powers! and have I found a father, under this ſacred venerable form! Explain this myſtery, moſt renowned of men; for yet methinks it is ſome wonderous dream.

Zila kneeled at his feet, bedewing them with a precious ſtream; and every cheek was wet with tears of joy. Lord Arco, Rutha, Otho, wiſhed to ſpeak; but ſuch an unexpected turn of chance ſuppreſſed each avenue, and made them dumb, till, after long revolving, Otho ſpoke.

What complicated wonders now emerge, and draw the curtain, moſt renowned of men, that long concealed thy intereſting tale! No idle ear  
can

can here devour your words; speak then, exalted mortal! draw the veil; disclose those truths we long have wished to know.

HERMIT.

Alas! how shall I recal past scenes, or draw from oblivion the ghosts of former joys, since deep in the silent tomb lie the hopes of my youth? But as flowers spring up in a barren wild, — so unexpected pleasures ruffle my frame, and excite strange emotions in a soul long since dedicated to the God of Peace.

Though long immured in a wild, and sunk in a Hermit's sober garb, in me you behold a prince, son of Alranchid, King of Zathia, heir of the crown, and loved by the people: no language but Adulation ever reached mine ear.

The King gave me birth, with a right to rule; but he gave a nobler blessing in appointing me a tutor of Learning and Virtue, whose soul glowed with rapture at sublime themes, and infused in my young mind a thirst after the sacred fount: Sobriety and Virtue were my first choice, and stopped mine ear to Pleasure's syren voice.

He attended me to different courts. His penetration inspired me with proper views. I every where bewailed the calamity of kings, as truth undefiled seldom reaches a royal ear; and resolved, if ever I came to the throne, to make both compatible,



compatible, and chase Corruption away. But those aerial notions are fled, like the vapours of a dream. Fate absorbed my growing honours, and humbled me in the dust.

Returning to court, my fame spread through the land. The learned flocked in crouds to visit me, and blessed the heir of the throne.

Simplicius, an excellent philosopher, made a noise at that period for his rare endowments, but chiefly for his simplicity and austerity of life. I urged Albosad to accompany me to his retreat. He complied; and we found in his excellent soul more than Fancy had formed, and greedily drank the treasures of wisdom that flowed in sweet periods from his tongue. His bower was fixed on the banks of a winding stream, with thick groves, and every thing that can inspire rural tranquillity. With this exalted mortal we spent many hours: sublime intelligence possessed his soul, whose lofty ideas made us glow with transports all divine.

One day, leaving Albosad and him in keen dispute, I stole into the garden to enjoy the air. In an arbour, fronting a cascade, I spied a maid, whose noble form surpassed all I had ever beheld. She resembled those divine nymphs whom Mahomet sets apart to solace the blessed in paradise. On viewing me, she fled with amazing swiftness, and left me motionless with wonder.

I mentioned the vision to Simplicius; who turned the discourse another way, and artfully shunned the theme. I likewise concealed my distress from Albosad, from a knowledge of his scruples; but we found Simplicius had a daughter of peerless beauty, whose mind he had enriched with every treasure that adorns humanity.

We urged greatly to behold his Phoenix; that was the name she went by. But we found it difficult to make him comply. Beware, O Prince! he said with a sigh. This lamb is all my store. Practise not on her tender heart, as you would wish to prosper on the throne.

She appeared. Divine Usebia burst on my ravished view, as the sun emerges from black clouds, and throws a lustre on the world. The graces of her mind were quite complete. She touched the lyre, and accompanied it with her heavenly voice, which quickly fixed my doom. How did I cherish the first approach of love, and give myself up to the pleasing violence? Albosad trembled when he found my passion serious, and strove assiduously to divert its course. But my heart was for ever fixed beyond the power of time to cure.

The stern Simplicius refused his daughter to my arms, and had her secluded from my view. He kneeled at my feet, and with a flood of tears cried, Dear Prince, pull not ruin on my white locks, nor let my child disgrace the throne. You are  
contrasted

contracted to the Princess Senobia; that marriage alone can secure the state. Princes must not wed like common men, nor indulge their wayward passions. My dear Prince, he exclaimed! pity an old man, who could lay down life for your sake, but cannot renounce my fame. I wept, raved, supplicated. He melted at my tears; but remained inexorable.

Distracted at his refusal, I flew home; nor durst Albosad offer cold reasons to my fury. I fell into a fever, and feigned myself worse than I was in reality; and plunged the King and nobles in an excess of wo. Albosad alone knew the truth; but that he never would reveal. Simplicius wrung his hands, crying, O sacred Virtue! dear must I pay for following thy divine rule.

Usebia, on whose heart a mutual passion was then grafted, hearing my danger, betrayed the fatal secret.

Albosad, said I, my dear Albosad! pressing his hand to my lips, refuse not this last request to your Prince. I am dying; but convey Simplicius and Usebia to my apartment, and I will bless you with my last breath. — He bathed my hand with his tears, and sobbed so bitterly, I repented having excited such lively grief. My dear Prince, he said, you shall be obeyed; the certain approach of your death makes every obstacle fly.—He brought them at night to my apartment; and being ordered si-

lence by the physicians, a private interview was not difficult. Oh! how my heart fluttered at the lovely form, and almost betrayed itself by transports!

I caught Simplicius by the hand; and he bathed mine with his tears. Dear Prince, said he! wou'd Heaven had placed you a shepherd on yonder hill! how would my heart have exulted at this union? But the King;—ah! Prince; the King.

He thought me dying; and, at my warm request joined with Albosad's, he left Utebia to watch by me. When we were alone, I discovered the deceit love had made me practise; and begged she would favour my design as she valued my life.

Love is an eloquent pleader. Though at first averse to comply, she at last consented with so modest a grace, that joy filled my breast, and pale Disease fled away.

Having concerted our plan, soon after my recovery she met me in a vale. I drove her in my chariot to a good old priest, whom I had previously gained to my views, who sealed the indissoluble vow, and united me to all I loved on earth. I carried her to a sweet retreat, and tasted the most sublime pleasures mortals can enjoy below. By degrees she unveiled the treasures of her soul; which

which I found, when put in balance, outweighed the grandeur of a crown.

I wrote to Albosad; who instantly flew to my bower. I clasped him to my heart, begging he would forgive my first deceit. Oh! said he with a sigh, may you ever find in love a solace for the honours you have lost: for, ah! it is most certain, my dear Prince, that with his Majesty you are undone. It was a more difficult task to appease the stern pride of Simplicius, nor would he see Utebia for a season.

Alas! my Prince, said he, thou hast undone thyself, and ruined the state: for in spite of the high transports which now dim your sight, I foresee the death of Fame. — Hold, said I, thou cold Philosopher; impair not my felicity by idle dreams; Utebia will one day become the brightest jewel of my crown: her virtue will refine the court, and make my Royal Father own her excellence.

Good my Lord, he calmly replied, you must conceal your union for a while; Prudence whispers that severe deceit. — And shall Suspicion cloud her spotless fame? shall my Utebia live to be suspected? Ah! Prince, how dear has your love and honour cost my child. — His swelling heart suppressed further speech; and he left us in seeming dismay.

Proud



Proud Philosophy ! said I, how shall I conquer this unfeeling virtue, and make him conceive the vastness of our bliss.

Soon after this, Usebia made me the happy father of a smiling boy. I called him Alranchid, after the King, and thought he would one day rule the state. Next year she blessed me with a daughter ; and my heart could scarce rein in my joy. Even the stern Simplicius wore the face of content. And next year Alransacher came, and I fancied myself at the top of felicity. So much was I glued to the dear pledges, that, when forced to be at court, I trembled, lest such excess of bliss should soon expire ; and could not be absent from where my treasure lay.

My story with Usebia never reached the King's ear, so much was I beloved. The courtiers connived at my seclusion, which they attributed to a wrong cause. But he feared Philosophy would harden my heart, and sent an embassy for the Princess Senobia to come to court. — Oh ! how my heart fainted at her presence, as decency obliged me to pay her outward respect. She was of a stately presence, and majestic mien : but mine eyes had seen Usebia, which made my heart insensible to every other form.

Unluckily she was pleased with my appearance ; but my coldness alarmed her pride. Her eyes were quicker than the King's ; and complained  
of

of my neglect, which almost drove him to madness.

He assembled the wisest of his senators, and ordered me to appear. The treaty was read, where it was made an article of peace betwixt the two states, to unite them together by our marriage.

Struck dumb with a mixture of warring passions, I could not reply for a long while. At last I arose, and expatiated on the cruelty of enslaving kings in a point so nice : That the soul was free ; and no power on earth could dictate to taste.— The King started up in a rage, crying, Is this the result of your fine studies, to rebel against your father and your king, to ruin the state, and bring on fire and sword ? Prepare to obey my will, or you shall repent in a dungeon. And he left the assembly with a frown.

The courtiers begged of me to comply, as resistance could never avail. I retired without uttering a word, glorying in having given Usebia so great a proof of my affection.

When I entered the palace, the King sent me a message, to expect him in my apartment. — I had not then an angry king to combat with, but a tender father, who kneeled at my feet, supplicating me to pity his old age, and not plunge the kingdom in ruin. — O Royal Father ! I exclaimed, overwhelm not your son with mortal shame.

shame. Arise, most sacred Majesty! arise; lest your miserable son expire at the impossibility of giving you content.

And art thou then deaf to the calls of Nature? said he, rising in a rage. Die, wretch! and he drew a sword. I made bare the point of my breast, crying, Strike, thou author of my life. Here pierce this stubborn heart, whose feelings alone make me resist your will. Take away my life; but leave me truth and innocence.

He held up the sharp point; but Nature dropped it on the ground, and he rushed from me in violent agitations.

I was immediately arrested in the King's name, and kept prisoner in my apartment, which I heard was to continue till I complied with his will.

The news soon spread abroad, and reached Usebia's ear; who would have risked all to have flown to my relief. But Simplicius told her it would hasten my ruin.

One evening a message from Senobia let me know she was to visit my retreat. — She came; and reflecting on the part I was to act, covered me with blushes. She dismissed her train: and we gazed at each other in silence. Generous friends, think of my dilemma: so circumstanced, how could I

address

address the Princess? — At last she spoke as follows.

I come, O Prince ! to give you liberty. The King has granted that favour to my tears. Though the cause of your confinement might alarm my pride, time I presume will blot it away.

I threw myself at her feet, and bathed them with my tears. Adorable Princess ! said I, on your justice I throw my life. Pity me, Gracious Lady ; for I am already married. — These words, like the lightning's flash, changed her mien, as the mild beams of the sun suddenly sunk in a storm. She rose, with fury in her eyes. — Married ! she exclaimed. Heard I aright ? Was it for this I was brought to court, that you might erult in my disgrace ? Traitor, I will be revenged ; and she flew away in a rage. — My heart fled, on Fancy's powerful wing, to Usebia, and solaced myself in her mildness.

But sleep departed from mine eyes, whilst the village-swain was lulled to repose. Next morning the keeper, with his face bathed in tears, told me with a trembling voice, I behoved to follow him to a dungeon. Such is the will of the King. O Prince ! impute it not to me. You are free, if you wish liberty. Should my life answer for it, you are free.

Lead, said I, thou generous mortal ! lead to the

the dungeon : in all I can I will obey the King. I entered into a dismal vault, where I was chained like a felon. Albosad entered one night. I rushed to his arms in spite of my chains ; and he lift up his voice, and wept. He told me, the Princess had informed the King of my marriage ; it was their intention to keep it a secret ; to dissolve my claim to Usebia, and unite me to Senobia. Vain chimeras ! Nature might go to wreck ; but Usebia was fixed in my heart ; nor could violence alter a soul like mine.

A month rolled away in this state, which seemed to me a thousand ages. One evening Simplicius and Albosad came to the dungeon. I received them with transport, and eagerly asked for Usebia.

The former shed a flood of tears, which gave a sad alarm to my soul. Alas ! Prince, said he, Usebia is no more. Heaven has broke your soft enchantment, and called her to the skies. He then told me of my daughter's death, who was born after her brothers.

Amana, like a flower blasted, sickened and died ; which, with her sorrow for your disgrace, preyed on her spirits, and hastened her doom.

Usebia dead ! I exclaimed, and fainted away. On recovering, I was quite frantic. — Lead me, I cried, to the gloomy vale ; unite me in death to those



those I love, which will give charms to the terrific King ! And thou, cruel philosopher ! how durst you lay my Usebia in the dust ?

I then gave the keeper a treasure, which enriched him at once ; and we all left the dungeon. On visiting the tomb of Usebia, I filled the air with heart-felt anguish, on which I read these words.

Here lie the ashes of Usebia, whose spotless affection for Alransacher laid her in an early tomb.

O how those characters tore my soul. I threw myself on the earth, where I lamented a whole month in all the luxury of wo, quite regardless of the precepts of the sage. Albosad sat with me in dumb sorrow, till Simplicius reminded me I had another pledge to lose. Alransched having died some time before this period, they brought the child to my view, which convinced me something on earth still demanded my care.

I perceived Simplicius's aim was to make me comply with the King's will, who issued orders through the kingdom to have me taken. My soul rejected the mean sentiment, though I dissembled my rage.

I went to my house, where the ghosts of my buried felicity glared in my view, and drove me to despair. The picture of Usebia hung round

the neck of my son. I used to gaze on both, till my cries frightened the infant.

One day Albosad, with his nurse, carried him on the water for amusement ; so childish was I become, I waited on the shore to behold their course. How shall I recollect the sad scene ? A violent storm, at one sweep, buried all my treasure in the deep. I raved ; execrated the powers above ; and but for them that stood on the beach, I had plunged in, and sought my child in the waves.

A form appeared, floating on the surface of the deep. A longboat was sent to its relief, and caught up Albosad, ready to sink in death. He was carried to my house, where every human aid was tried to assist him. But a fever ensued, which made his life doubtful for a season.

Simplicius attended with zeal and affection. I went to the chamber of Albosad, grasped his hand, but could only weep. When he was quite out of danger, I left him, and threw myself on the ground, invoking Death to finish my woe, and convey my soul to those I loved.

But Heaven, whose wisdom exceeds mortal ken, came to my aid, and in a vision taught my stubborn heart obedience and duty.

## The Wisdom of PROVIDENCE vindicated : A Vision.

METHOUGHT a being of more than mortal beauty, with fair locks and splendid wings, stood before me ; and, touching me with a wondrous rod, said, Arise, and follow me, thou child of dust ; come, and behold the justice of the Most High, and cease your idle murmurs.

I mounted with him through the air, till I felt myself on the top of an exceeding high mountain, from whose lofty summit I beheld the earth as a speck below ; the stars of heaven seemed to roll beneath my feet, and looked like so many worlds on fire. A scene altogether glorious burst on my ravished view ; whilst the verdure of the mountain on which I trod excited emotions not to be described, a choir of melodious birds warbled out notes ravishing beyond mortal conception.

At a distance I beheld a spacious building, whose gates were of fine gold, reflecting back the rays of light that beamed on it with unsufferable splendour. They flew open at our approach. — But I can give no description of the court, nor the glorious figures that were placed round as guards. An awful silence, and conscious unworthiness, damped every heart, whilst the ravishing sound  
proceeding

proceeding from the inner court, declared the vastness of their felicity, and the blissfulness of its guests. Oh ! happy end said I, of a short-lived probation ! What are the toils, the perils, of mortals, compared with such rewards ? Here will I rest for ever, happy in the privilege of such bliss. With this view I retired to the inner court, at whose entry a venerable figure, with looks of complacent gravity, stood centinel. I beheld many rejected who offered a list of their deeds ; but they fled from the touchstone of Truth, as vapours before the wind.

Alas ! said I to my guide, trembling, and in terror, how shall I persuade the angel to admit me to yonder regions ? for never again shall I reside in our fleeting world, or remain from whence my joys have taken flight.

Vain mortal ! said my guide, you must taste death ere you can enter those sublime abodes, nor are you yet worthy of such felicity, — when the transient evils of a fleeting life have force to make you renounce your duties.

Darest thou question power Almighty ? or say to heaven and earth's Eternal King, Oh ! wherefore in thine anger dost thou this ? Hast thou explored the counsels of the Most High ? or knowest thou his reason for acting to the children of men ? When other methods fail, he sends affliction to refine and rouse their hearts ; to raise them from  
earth's

earth's fluctuating scenes, and fix them on the stable joys of Heaven.

Behold that glorious arch that rolls with such inconceivable splendour, inhabited, for aught you know, with beings superior to man, and capable of praising God in more exalted strains. — Knowest thou their order in the universe? and for what end their light touches the earth below? Till thou canst account for those transactions, cease to repine at infinite direction, or call in question his divine decrees; — but try to reap such salutary fruits as resignation confers on the humble soul. Go kiss the rod, nor longer repine at the determination of God. Is he not diffused in all his works? In every herb and tree the sacred truth is evident. The time is approaching when thou shalt be wise as the angels above. Thy business below is to obey and be virtuous: for the knowledge that purifies the heart descends from the everlasting fountain of truth and rectitude; and to that quarter do thou apply for aid to guide thee through the difficult journey of human life, — till Death draw aside the curtain of mortality, and Faith be lost in blissful vision.

I felt unspeakable emotions as he spoke; and, springing up, was ready to confess his internal aid, when the scene vanished, and left me on the ground.

I viewed my dream as a favourable hint from  
my



my guardian spirit, to render me solicitous to gain the favour of my Almighty Maker, whose frown comprehends all misery, and in whose smile is endless joy.

Divine wisdom swept away the mist from the eye of my mind. I viewed the evils that oppress the just, as disguised blessings sent by Heaven to expunge the secret faults of those that seem most virtuous.

I resolved to dedicate the rest of my days to the study of Wisdom. Usebia, all my precious ones, were dead; my bonds were broke to things below; the world appeared a desert to my view. If I remained at court, I must either marry Senobia, or behold a weeping king and father at my feet. I put up a number of jewels, some cloaths, but chiefly that suit in which I was united to Usebia; and after apprising the King, Simplicius, and Albofad, that they would never see me more, I left the kingdom, dismissing my guide at every stage to prevent discovery.

The fame of Ludovico had often reached mine ear. I resolved to shelter myself under the wings of Wisdom and Virtue. But ere I reached this kingdom, he had left the world, and Agendemon had ascended the throne; which changed my plan. I found the dwelling of an anchorite in this wilderness, and rendered it fit for myself. Concealing my cloaths and books in a chest, I buried my  
jewels

jewels in the earth. I have since enjoyed the truest felicity, in tracing in his works below the footsteps of the Deity, and sometimes being useful to my brethren of men. — Thus, O Gelin ! is your dream accomplished, though obscured at the present time from your view. — How wonderful is the finger of Heaven ! how blind, how ignorant, the sons of men !

He ceased : all his audience still sat mute ; for oft the events of his wondrous tale had made soft moisture swim in every eye. — Otho revered him beyond all words, and thus expressed the fulness of his soul.

Instructive is thy interesting tale, illustrious Hermit. More than monarch ! ruler of thyself ! Blessed be the hour my feeble arm preserved, and kept from Ruin's jaw your only hope ; perhaps the legal heir of a most potent realm. Mourn not, good Lord Arco, at his flight. He came, by Heaven's appointment, here to weep, to save my life from meditated guile, almost by miracle to find his fire, and bless his evening-hours with purest joy.

#### RUTHA.

O Hermit ! let us join in grateful praise, that those vicissitudes that hurt your peace produced at last so useful a discovery. — But let us all accompany Lord Arco to view the chapel founded by the Queen. Her noble virtuous heart will melt in

A a

tears,

tears, and learn instruction from your wondrous tale.

Mean time, Alphonso, I must pave your way, and smooth the bitter news to poor Alzira.—Come at the time I fixed: I wish she knew how much she has to grieve.

C H A P.

## C H A P. X.

Come, thou divine nymph of placid mien !  
 Come, Patience, from thy blest abode ! child  
 of Religion and Virtue come, and bring thy mild-  
 ly-soothing powers, and teach Alzira's heart to  
 bear the blow. Make her hopes to heaven ascend,  
 where grief like her's alone can find relief.

See, she walks alone ! her bosom heaves with  
 swelling gusts of wo. Hark ! her voice replete  
 with anguish, invades the silent grove.

## ALZIRA.

Oh, Alonzo ! art thou then low, thou soul of  
 tenderness and truth ? Honour and Fame attend-  
 ed thy steps. Alas ! thy virtuous sensibility lies  
 silent in the tomb. O Death ! why didst thou take  
 us by halves ? Strike, thou grim tyrant ! strike :  
 Alzira's spirit longs to join with Alonzo's ; nor  
 will his joy be complete till she approach.

Rutha, Otho, the Hermit, and Alphonso, drew  
 nigh ; but kept silence a while out of a sacred re-  
 verence to her wo.

Daughter of Sorrow, said the Hermit, just are  
 thy tears, and flow from so laudable a source,  
 that not to mourn were offending virtue. But let

the precepts of age inform thy youth to guard against the sad excess : for once, like thee, O maid ! I loved to madness ; but Heaven snatched away the idol I adored, to fix my attention on things above.

God views the soul most ready for the skies ; beholds how struggling Virtue boldly toils against the allurements that oppose the fight. Lest sad Depravity the conquest mar, he sends Disease and Death to seal the triumph ; takes the immortal soul to bliss above, which helps to wean remaining friends from earth, when all they loved in this vale below has taken wing. It gives a warning voice, which sounds emphatically, Prepare ; for soon like me you must lie down in death !

ALZIRA.

Though my heart is sad, most venerable sage, I now find consolation in my wo. Last night a shining vision or dream composed my soul.

I beheld Alonzo more beautiful than when mortal. Arise, said he, fair Alzira ! take a glimpse of my felicity, and cease to mourn. I flew with him through the air an unmeasurable space, and found myself in a fragrant grove, whose beauty exceeds description. Here, my Alzira, said he, will I wait for you. Soon shall we be united to part no more.

O THO.



OTHO.

Your grief, fair Alzira ! has disturbed your fancy whilst you slept ; though dreams are wonderful, and make impressions we cannot account for.

Last evening I sat in the bower, reflecting on the varied scenes of my life ; and sure methinks I was broad awake ; when, clothed in his robes of state, with that majestic mien which forced awe, great Agendemon stood before my view ; and glaring by me with a stately pace, he thus began.

An empty shade is all that now remains of Agendemon, once your lawful king ; and in this place I now inhabit kings have no power : Virtue only claims superior rank ; and what men toil and struggle for below, is disregarded by the King of heaven, although their end be just. What then must wait the wretch, who, by corruption, guile, and malice, cheats his brother ? — Injured Otho ! thou hast been oppressed by my race. The recent memory of your matchless wrongs haunts Agendemon, now beyond the tomb.

I wished to soothe the mighty ghost, but suddenly he vanished from my view.

HERMIT.

Illusive forms impress our sleeping hours, which mock the power of Reason to explain. But this important

important truth we all believe, that, once confined within the silent tomb, a deep emphatic silence ever reigns ; nor can the king nor peasant burst those bounds, to interfere with idle schemes below, till that loud clarion burst through earth's vast bounds, and make each prisoner start to life and form.

But come, Lord Arco now will chide our stay : let us go visit your illustrious Queen, and view the noble fabric she has reared.

Alphonso gave the picture to Alzira. She viewed it heedfully, then shed some tears. Her father blessed the precious drops, as gentle harbingers of mellowed wo.

They accompanied the Hermit to his cell. He arrayed himself in his marriage-cloaths, in that suit in which he was united to Usebia ; and when he appeared, the venerable Hermit was lost in the Monarch's dignified mien. Lord Arco and Gelin met them in the wood ; and the rapid chariot soon drove them to the sweet retreat.

The Queen received them with politeness and affection. Those old courtiers reminded her of the days that were past, when the sun-beams of power gilded her brow ; and as the pearly drops of dew moisten the morning-rose, so Memory started in either eye a tear. Rutha asked, how her time passed away ? and she thus pictured out the peaceful scene.

Pleasant

Pleasant as the calm descent of a summer's eve, pass our days in this quiet retreat. Religion and Reason preside over all our actions, and render their recollection free from pain; equally removed from that grimace and austerity that throws over the angel a gloomy veil, and that levity and freedom which, by soaring above the prejudice that fetters, often flies beyond decency and truth.

Here the Muses are cultivated with care, and all the arts of Apollo; with every grace that can adorn the soul, with Virtue, Harmony, and Wisdom.

An exalted woman, whom Heaven sent here to show us virtue in a female form, presides over the nymphs, and tunes their souls to ideas quite sublime. To her instructive converse I devote all the hours she can spare from her nobler duties. She has got such ascendancy over my soul, which glows with rapture at the excellent precepts that drop from her lips, that I always leave her presence with regret.

We have some select fingers; others touch the harp and organ with skill; when joined together, they produce complete harmony. This day a grand recital of hymns and sacred songs is to be performed in the chapel: and hark! the bell tolls which summons all our choir. Will you, my  
 Lords,

Lords, attend our tuneful tribe, and honour with  
your presence our assembly ?

The motion gave them great delight. They  
followed the Queen to the chapel, which was ad-  
orned with elegant simplicity.

The virgins were ranged in order according to  
their different degrees. A curtain screened the  
performers from view ; but they could survey the  
assembly with ease. When their swelling notes  
burst on the ravished ear, O how they suppressed  
their breath, lest it had rushed betwixt the or-  
gans of hearing and one melodious air ! The Her-  
mit's soul dissolved in ecstasy ; the heavenly music  
of Ufibia's voice rushed on his mind, and drench-  
ed his eyes in tears. They sung such strains as  
made them guess the harmony of Heaven ; and  
raised such noble feelings in their souls as wafted  
them at once above the skies.

The music ceased. Each listening to hear more  
strains, would not break silence with dull dis-  
course ; when a reverend figure, pressing through  
the croud, his silver locks hung adown his shoulders,  
his wrinkled face exempt from decrepitude, with  
vivacity beaming in his eye, bespoke the vigour  
that was past. He threw himself at the King's  
feet, crying aloud, O Providence ! what, do I  
behold the features of my prince ? O Alranchid !  
art thou alive, when the thoughts of your death  
have rent my heart with wo ?

As

As one who fancies a spirit glares by his view,  
stands aghast; so looked the Hermit, till the elo-  
quent eyes of Albosad met his, and forced him to  
exclaim, Oh, Albosad! thou dear instructor of  
my youth, can I believe my senses? or have those  
sacred walls, so near my solitude, concealed my  
friend? Mysterious powers! where would you  
turn my thoughts?

From behind the screen the chief instructress of  
the virgin-train advanced; with silent dignity she  
stood and gazed. O Heavens! she cried, it is the  
same. O Alranchid! my Lord, my life, my  
husband; — and she fainted away.

An alarm seized the virgin-train: one fairer  
than the opening morn ran to her assistance, cry-  
ing, O my mother! my dearest mother! help!  
help! I shall lose her for ever; and bathed her  
pale face with filial tears.

Am I awake? cried the Hermit; or has the  
grave delivered up Usebia? Does not illusive  
Fancy tantalise me? Speak Albosad, and rid me  
from the torture of suspense.

## ALBOSAD.

No phantom, Prince, deceives your eyes, but  
your Usebia, constant, just, and true. The Her-  
mit caught her up, and she revived in his arms.  
Oh! Usebia, he cried; dear Usebia! art thou a-  
live? Thou whose death made me quit the world,

B b

and



and all the trifling glories of a crown. Whence come those mysteries so thick upon me? Explain them, most exalted of thy sex! Ah! me, I fear my rash seclusion has cost thee many a tear.

USEBIA.

And art thou then restored to Usebia, thou greatest, best, yet most distressed prince! How shall my grateful heart adore High Heaven, who thus hath given such ample bliss below! And see, my Lord, your daughter; see Amara: though bred within a cloister's calm abode, the virtues of her father swell her soul.

He prest the beauteous virgin to his heart; and whilst he gazed on her faultless form, parental fondness melted him in tears.—Gelin, who beheld this emphatic scene, felt emotions too big for utterance. He kneeled before Usebia, and claimed a share in her maternal love. But when she knew he was her son, who she thought was buried in the deep, how did she fold him in her arms, and throw her grateful eyes in speechless rapture to Heaven!

The Queen approached Usebia, and felt a mixture of pain and joy rush over her soul. She insisted on their leaving the chapel till the mystery was explained. But the virgins, in whose presence the discovery was made, demanded to hear the interesting tale. The company thought the re-

que

quest was just ; and having vented a little the rapture of her heart, Usebia spoke as follows.

You behold, illustrious Queen, how the fate of Usebia is reversed ; and you, O amiable virgins ! to whose improvement I have devoted so much time, mark how the finger of Providence, almost by miracle, completes my joy. And you, my much-loved Prince, where hast thou been secluded from Usebia ? where, O where, mourning her death, hast thou fled from kingly power, and all the fascinating splendours of a throne ?

When the rage of the King threw you into a dungeon, language is too faint to express my wo. I had quickly flown to your relief ; but my father assured me it would accelerate your doom.

Two weeks passed, when one day he came to me with importance in his looks. Come, Usebia, said he, prepare for a long journey ; take Amana with you, and meet the Prince your husband. Joy sprung up in my heart, as a pilgrim lost in Night's dark gloom, perceives a ray of light, and revives. Under the guidance of my father, I travelled some days : and drawing nigh this place, a frightful sadness covered his face. My dear Usebia, said he, child of my tenderest love, now must you exert the precepts I have taught you ; think you are the wife of an illustrious Prince : but you are my daughter, heir of my painful studies ; you are Usebia, and must be greater than a queen.

I trembled from head to foot at this preamble ; but I begged my dear father to speak freely, and tell me at once, if the Prince was dead. The Prince lives, said he ; but danger hovers over his head. By his consent I must place thee secure, till the King's rage blow away, and both be united in peace. Truth appeared in his words ; I calmly resigned to his will. He had got letters concerning the institution of this plan ; and wished me to repose under these sacred walls till the storm was past.

My father waited on the Queen ; who quickly appeared in person ; and finding something in me which gained her esteem, she gave me absolute empire over the virgins. I had learned maxims which were useful to their young minds ; and infusing them therein, tore me from thoughts more severe.

Three years elapsed, Hope raising deceitful fabrics, which Despair blew away, till Albosad arrived here, and ended at once my vain schemes. O Albosad ! dost thou explain the mystery, as verging to the extremest point of virtue made my father err.

#### ALBOSAD.

True, O Prince ! Virtue rose up to dash your joys. That celestial light, meant to clear all error from the soul, dazzled the weak eye of humanity. By gazing too intensely on the divine radiance,

diance, he grasped a phantom, and lost the sacred form.

When I perused your dismal letter, I rent my cloaths in the bitterness of wo. The King, whom you had likewise apprised of your flight, was in mortal sorrow. I was ordered into his presence; and, for the first time in my life, received with a stern air.

Hitherto Albosad, said he, I have viewed you as a treasure, to whose wise precepts my son owed his fame. I thought that son the fairest jewel of my crown, who would one day make posterity bless my name. — Where are now my sanguine views? Blasted by irregular passion. Disgraced, dishonoured is the heir of my throne. Traitor, inform me where he is fled, or a shameful death shall give posterity an example, how dreadful it is to tamper with a king.

I threw myself at his feet, and protested my innocence with a flood of tears. I told him of your love and marriage with Usebia; how her father and I laboured in vain to stop its course; of her death, and your despair; the ardour of Simplicius to make you comply to the King's will. He heard me with profound attention; heaving a deep sigh, exclaimed aloud, O miserable state of royal greatness! unable to conquer passions that clash with the peace of others. Go, and dispatch manifestoes  
through

through all the kingdom; declaring, if the Prince appear, I will pardon all past offences.

Couriers were dispatched every where; but in vain. Three years elapsed, and the King grew melancholy. The Princess Senobia being informed of the truth, and liking your person, waited to behold the issue. The King proposed to marry her to your brother, and settle the kingdom on their heads; but she did not relish the overture, and departed.

Simplicius and I often mingled our tears together, or sighed in silence. At last a profound melancholy seized his mind. He spoke in broken accents, and shunned my company.—One evening I had a message to attend him in haste. I flew, and found him stretched on his bed, pale, and his visage quite altered.

Oh, Albosad! said he, grasping my hand, my glass is almost run; life ebbs apace; and quickly I shall mingle with the dust. I perceive mine error too late; Virtue has defeated her own schemes. For, O Albosad! Usebia still lives. I secreted her to save the Prince; to produce peace, and fix him on the throne. Ah! me, I fear despair has finished his course. What demon then concealed truth from my view, and made me cherish Vice in place of Virtue! He then told me of her resistance; of his amusing her from time to time, with hopes of seeing the Prince. Why did I sever souls,  
said



said he, united by Heaven, much dearer to each other than sovereign rule ?

Go, Albosad ; after you have laid me into this mock tomb, go to Usebia ; unfold the truth to her ear ; her virtue will draw a veil over my faults, and give to my memory her esteem. I shall meet her in regions above, where, purified by sufferings, she shall shine as a star.

Soon after this he expired. I laid him in that tomb you thought contained the ashes of Usebia, and watered it with tears.

But, mindful of my promise to the dead, I sold my effects, bade adieu to Zathia, crossed the sea, and held on my way to this kingdom. One evening a storm of thunder and lightning made me fly for shelter to a thick wood :—A small hut at the entry afforded me an asylum ; the hospitable care of its owner convinced me, that Poverty was no enemy to a noble soul.

My kind host asked my adventures ; and I amused his ear with an interesting tale. In return, he gave me the real history of his life. He was a fisherman. I found he had saved my Prince's son from the waves, who I long ago imagined was buried in the deep.

He then lived at the sea-side. Being one day fishing, he beheld something floating ; which having

ving drawn to his boat, found the sweet infant; and quickly rowing to land, his wife assisted him to evacuate the water he had swallowed. He revived, and they loved him as their own child. He described the picture which hung at his neck, which confirmed me in the truth. But one day they both went to draw fishes out of the boat: on their return, the child was gone; nor could their utmost search ever find him; which so affected both, they retired to that quiet dwelling, still trying in vain to regain their stray sheep.

Though the hopes of his being in life were but faint, I built on them with a sort of joy; and taking a grateful leave of my kind host, whose name was Gelianus, I arrived here, where Usebia stood in need of all the precepts of Simplicius.

O Prince! what poignant woe has his error cost you both, though it took rise from an excess of mistaken virtue? Usebia's sorrow was blended with hope; yours, O Prince! was buried in the tomb. Religion came to her aid; and ministring angels taught her peace.—Oh! Alas! she often said, Let the applause I have given to Fortitude and Patience be confirmed now by imitation.

She related her story in confidence to the Queen; who mingled her tears with the fair mourner's; and, at her request, allowed me to remain and assist in the arduous task of forming the minds of youth.

Flattering

Flattering myself that the race of my Prince would one day ascend the throne, I have given Amana the learning fit for a Queen; whilst Usebia has given the polish, and added those softer graces of her sex, which, when wisely used, produce universal sway.

Thus, O Prince! are you again united, after a separation both thought eternal. Let hope inspire more confidence. I have kept an intercourse with some old courtiers, who still recognise Alranchid: Your brother is dead without issue; the kingdom in commotion is threatened with usurpation: let us then arouse their loyal hearts, which will with transport receive their king.

The virgins begged to hear the Hermit's tale; which, together with Lord Arco's meeting with Gelin, filled them with admiration and joy.

Lord Arco insisted on attending the Hermit and Usebia to his towers. Albosad set out to sound the hearts of Alranchid's subjects. The Hermit went once more to bid adieu to those sequestered wilds, where, with a lover's ardour, he oft had wooed fair Contemplation, Truth, and Virtue.

He dug up the jewels he had buried in the earth, and presented each of his friends with a brilliant piece.

Farewell, he cried, thou calm grot, abode of  
C c innocence

innocence and peace. Henceforth may roses flourish round, and fragrant breezes scent the ambient air. Ye trees, whose lofty branches hid me from the sun, may never ravenous bird of prey lodge within your boughs, but sweetest choiristers with rapturous notes inchant the silent dale.

Oft did those friends essay to part; such harmony resulted from their noble union, that parting seemed like breaking the chief string of a tuneful instrument, which mars the whole music. At last they resolved to attend the Hermit to Lord Arco's; where, after passing a while in joy, they departed. They took a tender leave of Zila and Gelin, whose grateful soul dissolved into tears, when he grasped the hand of Otho.

Adieu! he cried, my deliverer: may Infamy again perch on my brow when I forget my noble benefactor.

The Queen was inconsolable at parting with Usebia. The virgins dissolved into tears. Though her happiness gave them sincere joy, the thoughts of seeing her no more sunk them in wo; and she left them dull, as the earth when the sun sinks into the sea.

Otho and Rutha sought their native place. They met Avignor by the way; who was confirmed in the practice of virtue. The fair Almira  
threw

threw herself at their feet, acknowledging them  
the authors of her felicity.

The thoughts of procuring peace to others  
threw a placid joy over their hearts; and they  
cheerfully committed their future happiness to the  
care of Heaven.

C c 2

C H A P.



## C H A P. XI.

Come, ye celestial spirits that whisper instruction to mortal ears! tune my lyre, and swell each line with your sacred influence, that the mystic meaning concealed under the preceding tale may flash on the reader's view; that Divine Providence may be exempted from blame, in spite of Virtue suffering below; lest, like the towering eagle gazing at the sun, yet quite blind to the power that maketh it shine, they grasp the aerial shadow, and let the substance drop from their reach.

Albosad reached the capital of Zathia. The aged courtiers knew him at once. He recounted the wondrous tale of Alranchid, and quickly their ancient loyalty revived. They sent a deputation of the chief men at court to invite their lawful Prince to ascend the throne of his ancestors. Albosad, heedless of his age, guided their steps to Lord Arco's towers; and pointing out the Prince to their view, they threw their caps on the ground, saying,

Great Prince, live for ever; — accept the homage due from faithful subjects, who ardently wish to behold thee seated on thy father's throne. For he who in the desert commanded himself, and

quieted

quieted each turbulent passion in the soul, must sway the sceptre with wisdom and justice.

He raised them up, and received their gratulations with a majestic grace. Pausing a few moments, in graceful accents he thus addressed them.

Ye faithful subjects, whose loyalty to me has prompted you to traverse unknown realms to seek your lawful king, blest be your inheritance in the land; may you flourish in pre-eminence above the rest, as the lofty cedar lifts its towering head above the shrubs of the vale.

But think not your King, who fled to the wilds to shun the elevation of earthly power, whom the voice of wisdom in the shades constantly inspired with nobler views of grandeur than kings can learn on a throne, will now rejoice at swaying a sceptre, though lawfully inherited by birth. Since kings are accountable for their sacred trust, and if biassed by human frailty, they deviate from Justice's narrow line, what account shall they render up at last to the great King of kings? For as the mole under ground pushes its way to the face of the sun, yet blind to its invigorating ray; so obscurely dark is the wisdom of man to the moral government of God below.

But I accept the throne of my ancestors to realise those precepts retirement stamped on the mind; to prove their value by practice, as the light of heaven

heaven discovers the varied beauties diffused by the great author on every herb and flower.

So spake Alranchid, whose soul was pregnant with sublime wisdom; which expressed his thoughts in such alluring words as fixed them on the listening ear, as the harmony of sounds subdues the soul. His subjects again prostrated themselves at his feet; repeating with emotion, Long live Alranchid, our lawful King.

Under Lord Arco's hospitable roof, Time flew away on rapid wings. Exerting himself to regale his royal guest, he resumed the hilarity of his juvenile years. But the courtiers whispered in the royal ear, that anxiety was fixed on his subjects hearts till once they beheld him seated on the throne.

Dismiss me, good Lord Arco, said the King: let me pursue the destination of Heaven, which calls me from the privacy of quiet life to the arduous task of governing others.

How shall I part with thee! said Lord Arco; how forego the treasures of wisdom that constantly flow from thy lips! But thou art renowned superior to common men, and equal to the gifts bestowed on thee by the Most High must your duty and great exertion be. But since thou must depart, let Gelin and Zila remain, lest despondency seize mine age when left alone, like a blasted

tree

tree on the heath, whose once-flourishing branches  
lie withering on the ground.

No solitary tree in a barren wild must Lord Arco remain in his age ; he whose generous heart fostered the child of my love, when Fate's inevitable cruel blow exposed to destruction his infant-years. Thou reached thy friendly arm to the orphan plant ; guarded from vile impressions his young heart, by infusing the sacred precepts of virtue there. Those precepts must direct the flourishing branches to shelter the venerable trunk from which they sprung, and screen it against the blasts of devouring Time.

I expect Otho and Rutha here by noon. You, my Lord, must accompany them, and see me seated on the throne. The presence of my friends will make me bold in the equitable discharge of Royal power ; nor shall the noxious breath of Flattery poison mine ear, and relax the firm resolution of my soul. No, those select friends, who revered the wisdom of the sage, will tremble at the uncertain tenure of human virtue, lest Prosperity's false glare lead to actions that would tarnish the King.

By the sun's decline Otho and Rutha arrived. Their speed was accelerated by Friendship's force. They congratulated the King on his near accession to the throne ; prepared to attend him with alacrity and joy. In a short time they embarked  
with

with prosperous gales. Soon the towering mountains of Zathia met their eyes; the happy shores seemed solicitous to hail their King; when at once darkness invaded the hemisphere; a storm arose, which drove them from shore. The careful pilot exerted his skill, in coasting up and down the shore, lest they had measured back the same track; but resolved not to land till the thick shades of night fled away.

The first approach of Aurora calmed the storm's rage. The waves ceased to swell in proud surges; the red stars sparkled on high; their twinklings were reflected by the deep: when at once the swelling sound of music arose, as if Apollo had flown to earth to console with his divine harp the horror occasioned by the storm. The misfortunes of Alranchid and Usebia were sung, with all the disasters of their moving tale, mingled with lays so plaintive and fine, as melted the audience into tears.

What blissful sounds, said the King, softly steal on our ravished ears, breaking the solemnness of the night, as if some tuneful angel touched the lyre, to draw our melting hearts to hear his strains!

At the full approach of light, they beheld a sweet retreat on the shore: A garden loaded with ripe fruit, surrounded with trees that seemed coeval with creation; hills on each side, covered with sheep. Nature grew sweet and lovely; the hea-

vens



mens soft and serene. Each heart exulted at the pleasing prospect, and gave at once a shout of joy.

Quickly a youth appeared on shore, holding a lute in his hand, whose melody had attracted their attention. The King gave orders to the pilot to land, but conceal his quality with care.

The youth accosted the Noble guests with an air simple and ingenuous, but graceful and free, and invited them to take some refreshment in the bower, with the ardor of hospitality, untainted with modern guile. The King admired his easy address, the solidity of his remarks, and fine taste. He seemed some fair spirit of the grove, or Nature's rarest work, matured by her hand alone, more perfect than the art of courts in forming the heart of youth. He approached the ladies with respectful awe, as if the Graces had taught his soul the winning accents of refined address.

The inside of the bower displayed the same simple elegance. The King fancied himself in Arcadia, and that the age of gold, so celebrated by poets, still existed here. He asked him of his birth and education. The youth, whose name was *Sylvander*, answered him in these terms.

My father, whose name is *Melibeus*, is sole proprietor of this vale, and yonder rising hills. In his youth he was bred at courts, and has seen men; but from him I have imbibed an invincible

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dislike to those scenes of luxury, where Vice, varnished over with seeming elegance, chokes the growth of virtue in the soul, and lulls her hallowed voice into slumbers.

But he early instructed me in every branch of literature, made me court the Muses, with all Apollo's arts.—Music is my natural bent, from whose enchanting source my soul loses every languid impression, soars above dull mortality, by imitating sounds which doubtless shall delight her whole powers when earth and time is fled.

Astronomy affords a lasting fund of entertainment, pleasure, and instruction. Those celestial wonders, exciting admiration, makes the glory of this world recede from my view. Whilst I tend my sheep on yonder hill, a pure unmixed joy settles in my soul.—Nor am I uninstructed in the art of war. An old friend of my father's assisted him in my education: being a warrior in his youth, he has often described scenes of battle. The deceit of courtiers producing fatal effects, this confirmed my taste for simple life, where I glance at men from books, beholding the rocks on which they split, whilst I myself am superior to the raging storm.

I know love only in idea, having never yet beheld an object fit to inspire sentiments so refined; though I sometimes anticipate that blissful period.

as one of these delectable feasts futurity has reserved to treat my heart.

But my father, fearful of its bad effects, often cautions me against the poisonous seduction. The disasters of our Royal House, whose history you heard from my song, were often printed on my heart. Love tore away our brave Prince, whose virtue promised to instruct the realm. Desolation followed his flight, War and Famine ravaged the land.

After mourning his fatal immature end, next to a miracle he still exists; his subjects exult at the happy change, and soon shall he ascend the throne.

My old tutor, perceiving his loyalty revive, set out to court with the ardour of youth. He will send a messenger to us with the news as soon as that glorious event is recorded in the annals of our reign.

My father Melibeus still sleeps. I prolong with care the moments of his rest; whilst rising with the dawn, I mark the duties of the day, and hail the opening splendours of the morn.

His narration, so gracefully told, filled his ravished audience with joy; though they still doubted if all was not the effect of enchantment.

Blessed youth! said the King, whose heart the

wisdom of a noble instructor has guarded from those thousand snares, those mingled passions, that warp unawares, and thwart the ardour of virtue in the soul. But want of trial will damp your exertion; you must combat danger to try its force. By secluding yourself from the fury of your passions, you lose the palm which victory bestows. Follow me to court, where I go to wait on the King. He whom Adversity must have taught fortitude, will surely advance your merit to renown.

Oh! hold, thou revered form! said the youth; tempt not my virtue, feeble in itself, by so alluring a bait. Alas! the lustre of Virtue is faint below, and oft eclipsed by sudden events. Reason, that divine ray, that pledge of heaven in the soul, is often silenced by the loud roar of Passion, too much indulged. Draw me not therefore from this calm recess, where I enjoy a sound mind, that shrinks not from inspection's keenest probe; that feels alacrity in exploring the works of God, quite untainted with the pangs of remorse. Alas! should I lose such felicity by the false inebriation of a court, what honours can his Majesty bestow fit to balance a sacrifice so high?

The King was going to reply, when Melibeus entered the room. His venerable form excited attention. Age had silvered his hair whiter than the fleece that covered his flock: though he knew not the quality of his noble guests, his address was polite and respectful, expressing his joy that

his

his rural habitation afforded them an asylum of peace after the horrors of the storm.

The King gazed at Melibeus; and thought he had somewhere seen his features, though he could not recollect them with any force. He resumed the subject of taking Sylvander along with him to court, assured him of his interest with the King in raising him to honours; confessing his surprise in finding a youth oppose so flattering a design with arguments too refined for his years.

The aged eyes of Melibeus sparkled with joy. He contemplated the face of the King; and thus began.

Whoever thou art, O venerable stranger! that thus claimest an interest in our long-lost king, may the peace of Heaven rest in thine heart! bless and speed thy laudable designs. When I shall behold the ancient race of our kings lawfully fixed on the throne, in peace shall I descend to the grave, having seen my most ardent wish accomplished below.

I will accompany Sylvander to court, and watch over that virtue I have so carefully kept from that ensnaring scene: but, in real excellence, he is improved beyond my most sanguine wish. Should future times exalt him on high, the culture of his youth need never raise a blush upon his cheek.

Soon



Soon after this the King set out, and carried them both to court ; where his arrival was no sooner known, than the whole city exulted with joy : bonfires gave splendour to the night, whilst the voice of Festivity was resounded from the neighbouring hills.

The chief Lords rushed with transport into the Royal presence, eager to show their delight at his restoration. He felt the warmth of their zeal touch his heart ; a train of mingled passions assailed his soul ; his eyes dropped the trickling tear ; he ardently supplicated that Eternal Being, by whom princes rule, to fill his soul with wisdom adapted to his high rank, that he might fall on proper measures to render such worthy hearts completely happy.—When old Melibeus perceived that his late guest was the King, delightful sensations transported his breast ; and, spite of his prudent moderation, he wept aloud, and felt such emotions as made him retire. Sylvander attended him with filial piety, and fixed a deeper character of his worth on the heart of the King.

His Majesty was crowned with great pomp, and universal applause. What age had stole from the beauty of Usebia, was supplied by dignity, and a majestic mien. She moved with so graceful an air, as if Nature had formed her to rule. When seated beside his Majesty on the throne, a certain radiance beamed from their looks, superior to  
the

the charms of youth, which inspired their subjects with respect and love.

The pomp subsided; and as the epicure longs for some high-flavoured dish, so eager was the King to be alone with the friends of his heart; where he laid the dignity of Majesty aside, and reciprocally tasted the charms of sacred Friendship.

Tell me, my friends, said he, where shall I begin. Anarchy and barbarism has over-run the soil. Ah me! when contending powers dispute for possession of a crown, the welfare of the subjects is no part of their view. The coffers are exhausted; the people are oppressed; salutary measures must be fallen upon to stop these evils, and banish venal counsellors from the throne.

The character of Melibeus and his son rise in proportion as we view them nigh. Untainted loyalty and gratitude are rare plants in the garden of the world; whose tender blossoms must be screened with care, lest, blasted by the specious breath of guile, they quickly wither and die.

His friends assisted him to put in practice his excellent rules. Lord Arco proposed to visit the prisons, to explore those receptacles of silent woe, where Injustice assumes the form of Law, and cruelly sports with Distress.

Melibeus

Melibeus<sup>d</sup> and Sylvander attended the King when they entered those deserted walls, the haunts of Poverty and Disgrace. Many victims, who wished for death, as the only hope of liberty, were released by their gracious king, and felt the pang of Poverty no more.

What dismal place is this ? said the King, entering a long gallery, which led them to a room with grated windows. A venerable row of elms shaded it round, and gave a melancholy air to the gloomy mansion. The King ordered the windows to be opened, lest the long-pent-up air might have bad effects. The keeper pulled them up ; a blast of wind blew a bit of paper from a corner ; Sylvander caught it up, and, by the King's order, read as follows.

Regard my situation, O God of Truth ! deliver me, thou friend of the miserable. Thou art from everlasting, and thy years have no end. Thou beholdest the vanity of the sons of men, and canst turn unjust counsels into air : sudden emergencies can disconcert the plans of the crafty, and make the innocent shine as the stars of heaven. But in thee is safety, O Jehovah ! Thou canst call up the minutest object in Nature to execute thy will ; who then can strive against power Almighty, or resist thy absolute decree ? Exercise patience a little longer, O mine heart ! nor let despair overwhelm thy courage.

Oh!

Oh! Heavens, said Sylvander, sighing aloud, what a noble mourner hath here registered his wo? The savage beasts assist each other; Man only, Reason's king, scatters destruction over his kind.

Behold, said the King, another paper, which the wind blows in yonder corner. Sylvander took it up, and thus proceeded.

Roll on, ye stars of Heaven in brightness! and thou moon, fair ruler of the Night, thy mild beams excite my soul to calmness! Oh! when shall my spirit be released, and fly away from the oppressor's rage;—from the tender weakness of my own heart, which bleeds with the remembrance of what I have lost! Ye invisible guards, that hover round me, assume forms suited to my view, and soothe this dreary gloom. Alas! ye blessed beings, ye cannot converse with me till I lay aside my mortal frame, and be myself a spirit. Soft then, ye painful reflections; leave me the dull calm of indifference. Yet a little while, and this aged heart, the sport of cruel passions, will cease to beat; and this gray head, intitled to wear a diadem, soon must mingle with clay.

What tale of wo is this, said the King, that accident gives to our ears? Sure some mystery lies hid beneath those lines. He inquired at the keeper, who had occupied that chamber; who re-

E c

plied,

plied, he was but lately invested in his office; but heard, an old man had long been there immured; but was removed hence, he knew not where.

We must discover the truth of this, said the King, looking at the paper. Ha! diadem! he says; wonderful are the ways of Heaven, that exempts no rank from wo.

Melibeus took the paper, examined the characters with care, smote his breast, and cried aloud, What do I behold? the hand-writing of my Prince! Ah me! the unmerited sufferings of my honoured master wring my soul with sorrow! A flood of tears stopped his speech: he fell to the ground. — Sylvander sprung to his assistance, saying, O my father! whence proceed thine emotions? What prince dost thou mean? or who is thine honoured master?

Oh my son! said Melibeus, concealment would now be a crime. It is thy father, O Prince! Pardon the deceit of an old man, who, urged by affection, and to save thee from the fury of the times, so long concealed thy Royal birth from thine ear. Behold my gracious sovereign, he cried, rising, and throwing himself at his feet; behold your nephew, lawful son of Prince Ranfelmo, whose complaints Providence has brought to light by strange means. Alas! what bitter draughts has he quaffed from Sorrow's cup, whilst I thought him silent in the tomb? Oh! where shall



shall I search for the Royal mourner? Pardon, Gracious King, my irreverent tears.

The King was mute with surprise; Sylvander gazed, as one seized with a palsy loses all motion; the agitation of Gelin's heart was visible in his eyes; the similarity of his kinsman's fate to his own called for the sympathetic tear.

Thou wondrous old man, said he to Melibeus, truth is written in legible lines on thy venerable brow, and clears thy tale from the shadow of deceit. But quickly draw aside the veil which conceals it from our view; sure thy worth must charm our souls, and make us bless the grandeur of humanity.

Melibeus wiped the tear from his eyes, and thus proceeded.

As a man unjustly immured in a gloomy cell exults at recovering liberty and light; so my heart adores High Heaven, that thus to the ear of my King I can discover the truth.

Your uncle, Prince Ranselmo, was but a few years older than your Majesty. That affection he had for you in early life, had its basis in similar virtues. He anticipated your growing fame, and often blessed the hour of your birth.

When your Majesty refused to marry the Princess Senobia, and was imprisoned by order of the King, his generous soul disdained such ignoble slavery on the freedom of your mind. He argued boldly with the King on the violence of his measures ; demanded an interview with the Prince his nephew. The King, incensed at his arrogance, peremptorily refused his request. Perhaps my prince disclosed too much the resentment with which he glowed. The King banished him from court, to close confinement in the tower of Euopseon ; whose situation was most romantic ; fine gardens, with a large park, through which we were permitted to stray, (it had often been the residence of former kings) ; from which we had a prospect of the sea, and lofty mountains of Hypselia.

O Memory ! thou grand repository of ideas, by whose reflecting power we recollect past events, how mournfully pleasant to me is the retrospect of that period, when, by the lofty soul of my prince, our prison became an instructive school ?

Dejected for the loss of my liberty, Sadness covered my brow : though I rambled through woods and groves, the beautiful objects I beheld inspired me with no joy.

One day the Prince carried me with him to the top of an exceeding high hill, from whose summit a grand prospect opened to our view. He desired

me

me to sit down ; and, after smiling at my aspect, spoke as follows.

Why, O Melibeus ! art thou chagrined ? and why thy gaiety buried under so dark a gloom ? By submitting cheerfully to the will of the King, I do my duty, and am tranquil ; whilst you, by murmuring at the blow, enslave yourself, and fetter the freedom of your mind.

Cast your eyes around this sweet spot ; behold the varied beauties which solicit your attention. In such an asylum as this, your mind, disengaged from the bustle of a court, should imbibe philosophy from every herb and flower.

Let us not waste in stupid indolence this forced retreat from active life, but impose a profound silence upon our senses, — by soaring above each fretful passion, rise to contemplate celestial scenes, by commencing an intimacy with the works of God, and admiring the harmony that results from the whole.

Thus our prison shall become the seat of Wisdom, where she constantly resides, diffusing mild precepts over the soul. Blessed are they who practise what she utters : they spring aloft from the common track ; the shadow of ignoble pleasure never dims their sacred path.

Saying this, he led me toward a venerable building

building on the summit of the hill ; a thick grove shaded it round, and threw a solemnity over the whole. This pile, said he, was the residence of an astronomical sage, whose rare endowments the King my father prized very high. Here are telescopes of a wondrous size, by which we examine the celestial gems that sparkle in the vault of heaven ; whilst we gaze, earth lessens, and empires kings contend for, seem a toy.

My preceptor has followed me to this retreat : his presence will help our philosophical studies ; and those sublime pleasures that attend such noble pursuits, will balance our loss of liberty.

Great Prince, said I, throwing myself at his feet, your fortitude humbles me in the dust. Hence let me copy so great an example, and clothe my mind with a robe of wisdom. Thus our retreat shall resemble the morning-mist, which veils the beauties of creation from view, till the sun chase the vapours away, and shed a lustre on hill and dale.

A spacious library belonged to the castle, where my prince spent his leisure-hours, in selecting from the best authors treasures to enrich the soul. Every clear evening we watched some hours on the hill, till I became enamoured of the celestial spheres. Enlarged beyond my own narrow circle, I felt a harmony resembling those radiant orbs  
that

that move so regularly their course through the  
skies.

Thus our time stole away like a pleasing dream,  
which leaves a ravishing impression behind, till  
the news of your marriage with Usebia, her death,  
and your flight from the kingdom, reached our  
ears.

This blow deprived my prince of his firmness.  
He sunk into a despair which blasted our fabric of  
joy. Melibeus, said he one day, your solicitude  
for my peace sensibly affects my heart : with care  
have I studied your character, and am now going  
to give you a proof of my confidence.

Alas ! Melibeus, poignant wo for my nephew's  
flight, with the irreparable loss the kingdom must  
sustain by that dreadful blow, are not the only  
sources of discontent your prince must feel. As  
the stormy wind agitates the calm surface of the  
great deep, so doth love ruffle a soul formerly  
serene.

You know the Princess Meliza accompanied her  
cousin Senobia to court. Obligated by my rank to  
be often with them, I quickly perceived something  
in the charming Meliza that engaged my atten-  
tion. Superior beauty I had seen unmoved ; more  
engaging manners I had likewise beheld, which  
only gained my respect. Nothing before ever pe-  
netrated my heart, till I beheld this divine maid.  
Our



Our sentiments were reciprocal ; the sublime essence of Love quickly engages the heart, which occasions that unspeakable enthusiasm which veils every blemish, and renders eloquent the timid glance of fond desire.

Impatient to behold Meliza, I have bribed the guards : they confide in my probity and honour, that I will restore myself in two days.

Go, Melibeus, prepare for my departure ; imagination on wing anticipates the ecstasy of meeting my Princess. By day-break we reached the city ; where, like an owl, my prince was forced to shun the light ; but sent a letter to Meliza ; who met him at night in the palace-gardens. How delightful were their first transports ! Both bewailed the public calamity, and renewed those vows of constancy and truth, which never ended but with their lives.

We returned in secrecy to the tower, and resumed our former plan. But Love made solitude irksome to my prince. He warmly solicited the King to restore him to liberty. Alas ! the poison of Suspicion had deeply tainted the Royal mind. He suspected the Prince was in collusion with your Majesty's flight, and offered to his just demand a deaf ear.

The Princess Senobia suffered indignant rage to swell her bosom against my prince. The pangs  
of

of despised love tore her heart, which resembled a troubled stream, whose proud current flows dark and unequal over craggy rocks, and spreads below into empty froth with a rugged sound.

She discovered his passion for Meliza, and exulted in the power of making him suffer in his turn; and so sily settled her plan with the King, she was on the eve of her departure ere Meliza knew her plan; and insisted as an article of keeping the peace, the perpetual imprisonment of Prince Ranselmo.

Vindictive woman! thus to lose the softness of her sex in passions so unamiable! How unlike the fair Meliza, whose mild constancy imitated the dove! and whose goodness, more than the power of her gold, procured a courier to transmit the truth of those transactions to my Prince.

Great exertion under complicated wo is only the province of elevated minds. The feeble race despairs to conquer, and meanly sinks under the blow. The lofty soul seeks superior aid: though he feels, as a man, the sharpest edge of grief, he is waisted at last to a blessed asylum in the regions of Fortitude and Patience.

My Prince experienced those vicissitudes: that fatal billet overwhelmed him in the deepest wo. He threw himself on a couch, where he long remained in useless sorrow.

I tried to soothe him with all mine art; but silent acquiescence had the best effect. To oppose to the rage of grief rhetorical flourishes of vain philosophy, is like attempting to penetrate with a siphon the solid rock. He feasted on woe, and seemed eager to court it alone; but a dignity appeared in his affliction, which penetrated mine heart, and imposed silence on my tongue.

Dear Melibeus, said he, there is a charm in thine affection which wins me from woe; and next to the Princess Meliza, I hold you nearest my heart. Come, then, assist me to court Patience from her mild retreat: though her draughts be bitter, their effects are certainly divine. Stigmatized with infamy, I am here immured, accused of crimes my soul abhors. I must love Virtue for herself alone. Sure she is more than an empty name. Her radiant charms cannot be eclipsed by human reproach. Her ineffable smiles will console my heart; and, next to the voice of Heaven, raise me above the malice of men.

I went to court with a letter to the King, to try if Nature would soften his heart, and blow the prejudice of Calumny away. But Melancholy had seized his heart. Weak, timid, irresolute, he durst not infringe the articles he had signed with the Princess.

Two years rolled over us in exile. My Prince felt the triumph of conscience exalting him above  
injurious

injurious detraction. Let us not sink, said he, under the pressure of Adversity; but repel Fear by Hope; Grief, and every fretful passion, by Fortitude and conscious Innocence. The influence of wicked counsels are not eternal. Though elemental war for a while darken the air, when the sun shows his bright face on high, we soon forget the horror of the storm.

Suddenly the King died; and your brother ascended the throne. Flatterers got hold of his ear, and rendered him inexorable to every just petition of my Prince; who at once grew pensive and sad, sat whole days with his arms across, his eye fixed on the ground.

One night I awaked in great surprise, hearing a noise in my chamber. By the moon's light I perceived my Prince, with such anxiety of looks, as made me demand the cause with a loud voice.

Dear Melibeus, said he, you will now smile at my weakness. The phantoms of the night disorder my brain; nor can the voice of Reason give relief. Dreams, the sporting of fancy, alarm mine heart: The Princess Meliza in tears solicits mine aid. This night I beheld her, pale and disordered, crying, Haste, O Prince! arise, and save me from ruin.

There is something uncommon in this vision, which agitates my frame; nor can the vain ma-

aims of philosophy amuse my feelings. Ah! Melibeus, should danger hover over Meliza; should that imperious woman Senobia, to revenge herself on me, force her to wed another! Alas! I cannot describe mine emotions. Come, let us be gone: no bolts nor bars shall longer guard me.

The tutor, who was in the secret, had horses without the walls. Undiscovered we slipped out at a by-path, and long ere day were beyond pursuit.

We soon reached Senobia's kingdom. The King her father was lately dead; and she had ascended the throne. I found means to send a letter to Meliza; who quickly conveyed another to my Prince, verifying his sad presages, by telling him the Queen began her reign, by almost forcing her to marry another, and had confined her to her apartment a close prisoner upon refusing.

My Prince's emotions at this sad news were so lively, I dreaded the severity of their effects. I urged him to persuade the Princess to fly with him from persecution: some blessed spot would be found an asylum for such faithful lovers.

Where would the Princess fly from herself, said he, after violating the sacred laws of her birth and rank? A pure veil of modesty and truth screens her from the bare proposal of what might fully the lustre of her spotless life. I will discover myself



self to her father; paternal love may sympathise, and give her to my affection.

He spoke to the Prince; who felt the ardour of his affection, and undertook to soften the Queen. But as sudden storms ruffle the smooth surface of the deep, so did her anger burst into indecent rage. She charged her uncle to give no sanction to a vagabond prince, who had lost his liberty, and who should feel the edge of her resentment, to curb his audacious hopes. She flew to Meliza, loaded her with bitter reproaches, bade her prepare to marry Prince Astyanax, or feel the effects of her rage. Meliza asserted the rights of Nature; avowed her obedience to her as a sovereign, but declared no human power should make her violate the promise given to Prince Ranselmo. Bold wretch! said the Queen, I will punish your arrogance in the idol of your wishes: He shall die; ere to-morrow's sun he shall cease to be. And she flew off like a fury.

Meliza let my Prince know all these transactions; appointed him at a certain place to expect her orders; and from her chamber at the dead of night issued forth the Princess and her favourite maid. Though the blush of Modesty glowed on her cheek, the severity of her fate authorised the bold deed.

O Prince, she said, let us fly: Ruin hovers over your head: nor can Meliza be safe behind. Blessed beam of light! he replied; how joy revives at  
your

your words, and scatters the gloom of despair!  
The arduous attention of my whole life is too little  
recompence for such felicity.

They entered the chariot with the Princess's  
maid. We rode behind, and quickly reached our  
old tower. The keeper, dismayed at our flight,  
had never discovered our being away. I procured  
a priest, who united them for ever. Never did  
Hymen smile on a more faithful pair.

She blessed my Prince with a son, who was  
called *Ranselmo*. She nursed him herself; which  
increased her delight, and endeared her to my  
Prince. — How Queen Senobia so long restrained  
her rage was surprising: at last it burst out in vio-  
lence like herself; she accused my Prince as a  
traitor, insisted he might be strictly confined. The  
King did not oppose the torrent. My Prince was  
seized by the guards as he strayed through the  
fields. Resistance was in vain. He resigned in si-  
lence, ordering me to smoothe the recital of the sad  
tale to Meliza.

Oh! how she wept, and supplicated the powers  
above to support them under such unmerited wo!

My Prince was carried to an old tower, and  
guarded like a felon. I never got admittance but  
before one of his guards. But he strove to mode-  
rate the sorrow of his Princess by precepts most  
sublime.

Sure

Sure there is a place of bliss beyond the skies to reward such matchless sufferers below, whose patience and mild acquiescence triumphed over the inhuman fury of their savage persecutors.

Queen Senobia, to glut her implacable ire, sent for the Princess Meliza, to punish her flight by confinement, and torture my Prince by her absence. But her rare qualities had gained the hearts of all the guards : they gave us notice of the design in time to elude the blow. I secreted her in the house of a friend, whose loyalty I knew no gold could corrupt.

Frustrated in her view, Senobia's cruelty blasted all our hope, and furnished with an early tomb the most affectionate of human beings.

Detained beyond my usual period of visiting the Prince, judge the consternation of my soul, on finding the tower empty, the rooms and stair-case covered over with blood. I cried aloud, and fell on my face : the noise brought up an old man, who occupied a low apartment, who gave me this detail.

Oh ! faithful servant of an injured prince, cease to grieve for his inevitable ruin. The Queen, enraged at missing the Princess, sent a party to kill him in the tower. The keeper gave him a sword ; and, with his valiant arm, he laid many low ; but at last he fell, covered with wounds.

The

The bodies were interred by order of the King, and Silence inhabits the tower.

Dumb sorrow festered in my heart. The old man lifted me up, repeating the dreadful truth, which confirmed me in stupid wo.

Alas ! how was I to appear before the Princess ! how kill her at once with my dismal tale ! I hovered about the gate till night, instead of going to her apartment as usual ; and I flung myself upon my bed to indulge despair. She trembled at my uncommon reserve, and sent Cleone, her favourite maid, to order my immediate appearance. What could I do ? my emotions were too exquisite for disguise. Instead of answering a thousand questions in a breath, I burst into tears, and fell at her feet.

Speak, Melibeus, said she ; tell me the worst at once : but strike me not dead with the horrors of suspense. — Oh ! hapless Princess, I cried, the Prince is dead ; the savage Queen has killed him in the tower.

Could we figure angels in wo, they must have then resembled Meliza ; only a wildness dwelt in her eye, but no tear wet her cheek. Clasping her hands together, she repeated, with emotion, Ranselmo dead ! Immortal powers, and does Meliza survive ? Blessed are they whose sorrow, like the dropping fount, dissolves in tears. I dreaded the calmness

ness of her grief, and wished for a whirlwind of passion to exhaust its rage.

A month passed away; her firmness exceeded belief: at last she drooped, like a flower, whose foliage, excluded from the sun's ray, loses its lustre, and fades away.

One evening, ordering Cleone and me to attend her, raising herself up, her eyes sparkling uncommon fire, she thus addressed us.

Hearken, ye faithful pair! to my last words, ye, whose matchless sympathy has solaced my bitterest hours; and thou Melibeus, rare example of fidelity and truth, Heaven will reward thy affection and zeal to the best of masters. But, most unfortunate of men, soon will the curtain drop that ends my business with mortal things. I shall meet Ranselmo in purer climes, where the law of Cruelty hath no sway. There the persecutor shall tremble, and be ashamed: the righteous Judge cannot be biased, but will bestow a just retribution to every rank according to their works. To thy affection I commit Ranselmo. Be a father to his infant years, O Melibeus! inspire him with sentiments equal to his birth: but conceal it with care from his view; lest resentment fire his young heart, and pull on his head the rage of his foes.

G g

Take



Take these jewels, showing a casket; what it contains will keep him above dependence, or sacrificing truth to the caprice of others. But teach him unfeigned piety, which constitutes the noblest character of man: it inspires the truest wisdom, and whispers peace to the afflicted soul. — Here her strength failed; and she lay silent. I answered her only with my tears; though my heart took Heaven to witness with what fidelity I would obey her order.

Soon after this, Cleone summoned me to her apartment: a sacred triumph beamed in her eyes, superior to the weakness of her frame. Having kissed her son with tenderness, she gave him to my arms, saying, O Melibeus, I bequeath this dear pledge of thy master's love to thy care. Rear up the young immortal to pursuits worthy of such noble views; and if departed spirits deign to glance at human actions, mine shall hover round thy head, and assist the arduous task. — Farewell, blessed mortals! our next meeting will indeed be joyful, where everlasting happiness shall crown our toil.

Oh! how calmly she expired, as if a seraph had stole her breath, and stretched her in celestial slumbers! I repaired to our old residence in the tower, and filled the guards with sorrow at my news. By their aid I deposited her precious remains in the vault, beside the ashes of former kings.

I married Cleone, whose veneration for the Princess made her a fond mother to the Prince her son. Careful to fulfill my promise to the dead, I purchased yon retreat on the shore, where we eluded the courtier's snares, and all the guile of a court. I prevailed on the tutor to take up his abode with me, who consented; and, since, our joint efforts have been to discharge our gratitude to the best of masters, by forming with care the heart of his son. Cleone acted her part with zeal; but she died some years ago, and left him solely to our care.

Thus, gracious King, ends my narration, tho' this paper declares the Prince died not in the tower; but the rest is clothed in mystery, and quite impenetrable to my view.

Wondrous are the events of thy tale, O Melibeus! said the King. The evils occasioned by my rash flight inspire me with horror. That action, which the vain wisdom of men dignified with applause, perhaps is reprobated by the King of Heaven, who allots to each mortal a sphere of action; nor can he relinquish his post with impunity for human sufferings.

Young Ranselmo was presented to the Queen and Amana. The charms of that amiable maid inspired his heart with new sensations, which quickly grew too violent for restraint. Melibeus

told his Majesty the truth; who rejoiced at having the power to make his nephew happy, and exalting to the highest pinnacle of honour the worthy son of an unfortunate prince.

The virgin-heart of Amana had caught the infection. With modest reluctance she consented to his bliss. — Seldom did Hymen unite a more excellent pair, whose hearts, unimpressed by any other passion, glowed with so pure, so ardent a flame. When they appeared before the altar, such elegance of form in Amana, veiled with a crimson blush; such a noble mien in Ranselmo, with truth, honour, and virtue beaming on his brow, produced such emotions in the audience that they melted into tears of joy.

Melibeus sought the shade, to contemplate so blissful an event alone; when at once his eye perceived the tutor, and he gave an involuntary shout of joy. O Melibeus! cried he, how shall I tell the surprising truth? The Prince, our long-lost master, still lives. For, in my journey to court, I lost my way by sudden darkness. I alighted at an old pile of building, resolved to shelter myself till day. Perceiving a light from a window, I drew near, to view the inmates of so ancient a place. I beheld two men supporting another, who was bending beneath age and pain. Curiosity drew me to the window; when the voice of my Prince touched mine ear, thus uttering,

O generous friends ! what heroism dwells in your souls, thus to cherish, at the risk of life, a hapless prince, who can offer you nothing but tears ! Death cannot now be far off, whose arrow at once will place me beyond wo.

The well-known sounds reached my heart : his figure, his air, convinced me it was he. Transported beyond Discretion's bounds, Mysterious Providence, I cried, do I behold my Prince ? and leaping in at the window, which was on the first floor, threw myself, in a frantic manner, at his feet.

Astonishment seized my Prince and his friends. I lost the power of utterance, which produced an interesting scene. But my Prince recognised me in spite of absence and time ; smote his breast, and exclaimed,

Thou sacred form of my old instructor ! hast thou left thy place of rest to console thy forlorn prince ? Speak, blessed spirit ! nor think I dread thy voice ; for mine longs to be released, and fly with thee to regions of peace.

I am no spirit, O Prince ! I replied ; though I long ago thought you roving amongst superior beings. Bewildered in the dark, and finding you still on earth, drove me to an excess which Reason must condemn.

I recounted all that happened since we parted, which drew tears from his eyes — And lives Ranselmo and Melibeus? said he, with a voice faltering with emotion; and have I wept their death so long in vain? — How dark are Heaven's ways to man!

This agitation threw him into a fever, which made us tremble for his life. I sent an express to you; but found you not. I judged you were at court. The Prince recovered beyond our hopes. I left him calm; but impatient to behold his son and Melibeus.

Melibeus informed the King where the Prince resided, who was impatient to behold his revered uncle. The Queen, Amana, and Ranselmo attended; who, guided by the tutor and Melibeus, quickly reached the ancient hall.

His Majesty entered first, followed by the Queen. The meagre form of his injured uncle wounded his heart: he burst into tears, and fell at his feet. Alas! thou suffering martyr! he cried; what sorrow have I innocently plunged you into? but hate me not, thou heroic soul! but open now your heart to peace and joy. The Prince fell on the King's neck, saying, Arise, thou sacred Majesty of Zathia. To see you so cancels my past afflictions.

The



The Queen clasped him in her arms ; bid him behold his son, seeing Ranselmo enter. He sprung to his father's breast ; who pressed him to his heart, and felt an agony of paternal joy.

Image of my long-lost wife ! he cried, inherit the virtues of her soul, and thou shalt be blessed. But whence comes this beam of light ! seeing Amana kneeling, and bedewing his robe with her tears. It is my daughter, and thine, said the King : I have given her to Ranselmo ; and by her shall thy race be multiplied.

What glimpse of paradise is given me below ? said the Prince. Whilst I had bid adieu to pleasure, and even defied Misfortune's pressure to wound me further, the veil of Adversity is torn away, the region of Calamity is succeeded by a fair field of joy.

But come, Melibeus, thou perfect pattern of fidelity and truth, why standest thou at a distance from thy Prince ? The rare virtues that reside in thine heart, atone for half the vices of the age.

The King informed his uncle, how far Melibeus had given them his tale ; but begged to know by what means he had eluded the fury of his foes. Ranselmo sighed at the reflection, but spoke as follows.

Love, the sweetest passion of the soul, once cross-  
ed

ed in Senobia's heart, planted lasting furies in her breast. She wreaked her rage on me, whom she suspected of frustrating the wishes of her heart: her inhuman orders reaching the keeper of the tower, he abhorred the vile act;—informing me, with tears in his eyes, giving me a sword, begging I would change cloaths with him, that the badge of royalty might not hasten my ruin. No, said I, thou generous man; never shall my safety endanger your life; but give me the sword; I shall sell my own at a dear rate. He threw himself at my feet, begging I would comply. At last, one of the guards took my robes, and I dressed myself in his; but when I beheld him fall at my feet, whom they took for me, it swelled my rage to such a pitch, I made many of them expire; but, fore wounded at last, I sunk amongst the slain. The keeper removed me to a place of silence, and got my wounds dressed; but two months expired ere I was able to leave my bed. The King thought I had fallen in the tower, and ordered me to be buried in silence.

Impatient to behold my dear Princess, I set out one evening to her asylum of peace. O judge the horror of my soul: the dreadful feelings that tore my heart, to find her numbered amongst the dead, Melibeus and my son beyond my reach. I raved and execrated, almost arraigned the providential sway of Heaven.

My wounds bled afresh; and a fever ensued, which almost cost me my life: but Nature prevailed,

ed, and I recovered to feel more wo. Having learned where the ashes of Meliza were deposited, I went to the vault, and clasped the cold urn in my arms, bedewing the vault with my tears. Look down, I would often cry, thou dear spirit of my murdered wife! pity thy despairing husband: Oh! let him rejoin thy blessed shade. — But however laudable my sorrow for the worthy deceased was, I became culpable by the vastness of its excess.

Having adorned the vault with flowers, from which a flavour was exhaled, liker a bed of roses than the repository of the dead, indulging myself one evening in all that luxury of sorrow, which only souls penetrated like mine can ever conceive, till Nature, wore out by such severe grief, I fainted away. I know not whether it was a dream or vision; but I fancied myself still in the vault, which on a sudden was illuminated with a shining light. My wife's form, in resplendent brightness, stood before me: immortal youth and beauty smiled on her brow. Gazing at me with love and pity mixed in her eye, she thus addressed me.

I am permitted by the Most High, who views with compassion the error of mortals, to allay your grief, and cure your ignorance. Dim is the wisdom of man concerning the counsels of the Creator, else you would exult at my early release from wo. I exist with God and angels, ravishing beyond the glance of human faculties; and all to come is con-

H h

summate

summate felicity. Beware of indulging unavailing sorrow : the silent clay feels not the trickling tear. Think on the pledge I left below, lest he suffer by a parent's neglect. Let a tender regret supply the place of such poignant woe : for soon as your thread of life is spun, I shall waft you to immortal felicity, which will soon obliterate all earthly sorrow. She ceased : I was rushing to her arms, when she vanished, and left me in darkness.

The guards conveyed me from the vault, and put me to bed : my dream produced blessed effects, as it hinted at Ranselmo's being in life. I inquired over all the kingdom for Melibeus and Cleone, but in vain. Hope and fear for a long time equally ruled my heart : at last Despair fixed a coldness in my soul, which rendered tasteless all the joys of life.

The hope of a great reward inspired one of the guards to inform the King of my residence. He trembled for offending Senobia, who then kept him in suspense of uniting her kingdom to his by marriage ; but, awed by some internal power, he took not away my life, but shut me up a close prisoner in the room in which your Majesty found the paper ; whereon, at different periods, I had depicted the chagrin that preyed on my heart.

Yet, in this state of trial, Religion and Reason did not desert me : Conscious innocence excluded  
murmuring

murmuring at the allotments of Providence, as no sublunary blessings are without some alloy of infelicity; nor can Misery soar so high but the balance of a good conscience will turn the scale. Thus harmony filled my mind, like the sun dispelling the mist from the mountains, which opens to the shepherd's eye a clear prospect of the plains.

Twelve years passed on in this dreary gloom, debarred from social converse, which is the soul of life, till the death of the King altered the prospect. Amused by Senobia, for her own ends, she at last rejected him with scorn. Remorse and shame preyed on her mind. She pined a miserable victim to unjust resentment. Meliza murdered often glared by her view, and wounded her guilty heart.

Having no heirs, her nearest kinsman ascended the throne, who threatened our kingdom with usurpation, as your brother had no children. I myself had the nearest title to the throne. But malecontents arose, who hearing I was in prison, laid a deep plot to take away my life. But the matchless fidelity of my old friend, who had then the charge of this tower, with the parks where the deer reside, came by night, having gained the keeper of the prison, who conveyed me to this silent retreat, where I have been cherished these four years by their friendly care. But Heaven has changed the dark scene, blest me with joy when Hope was fled. Who can limit Omnipotence in his love to mortals? As Spring succeeds



to Winter's awful gloom, so can his powerful arms reverse the season of sorrow.

OTHO.

What woes, illustrious sufferer ! hast thou passed ! nor spotless virtue, birth, nor rank, could ward the blow. How stern Injustice reared her hideous form, plunged you in Misery's black stream, from whose sad waves, next to a miracle, thou hast emerged ! What then am I ? A feeble, vain complainer, without cause. Henceforth let me bless the powers above, that e'er Adversity approached mine heart, that e'er I drank the wisdom of the sage, or heard the instructive tale of Prince Ranselmo.

The Prince was carried to the palace, and treated with honours due to his birth. Though above the false glare of show, he suffered decent joy to settle in his breast ; whilst his son moved in a superior line of excellence, displaying a judgment beyond his years.

Albosad assisted at their councils. But Melibeus declined accepting any public office ; but begged to attend his Prince as before, and spend his days in the service of his honoured master.

Dear Melibeus, said the Prince, nothing shall ever separate us but death. Rest ever under my roof, thou perfect pattern of truth and honour.

The

The virtues of thy life shall throw a lustre on thy gray locks, and make posterity revere thy name.

He took the tutor likewise to his house; where they lived together like friends, often ruminating on past events, which produced a pleasing melancholy. But they mingled at the King's select parties; where Wisdom, Truth, and Honour resided, mingled with harmony and decent joy.

The keeper of the tower was created a knight, with a gift of those ample domains to descend to his race for ever; whilst the old fisherman and his wife were brought to court, and settled for life in plenty and peace.

Otho and Rutha remained two years at court, and beheld those virtues, matured in the desert by Adversity, put in practice from the throne. They fought to revisit their native land. Though the King anticipated the pang their absence would create, he had daily expected the blow, and owned their request was just.

Farewell, my friends, he said. Go, and enjoy domestic felicity. But think the bonds that fixed you in your native land are weakened by time and adverse scenes. Settle your affairs with haste, and return to me with your families for ever; and let us feast on sacred friendship. — They promised to obey; and departed with tears in their eyes.

Rutha

Rutha found his daughter on the brink of the grave. Since Alonzo's death, she pined away; she welcomed death with a placid smile, and dropped into his arms like one falling asleep.

Otho consoled Rutha and Ermina with sublime counsel. — Let real submission to the will of Heaven, said he, hush all our rebel passions into peace; nor murmur at those strokes, though hard to sense, that from his hand oft gives our joys a blow: but walk in Virtue's narrow line, though human violence should make it bleed. The eye of Heaven beholds the upright soul struggling against the varied ills of life. Though storms and tempests roar below, all above is harmony divine; and afflictions, whose duration is short, if sanctified, and relished right below, facilitate our voyage to worlds of light; where noble pleasures, void of all alloy, await to gratify the immortal soul, [and one triumphant sacred voice of praise shall ravish and transport its boundless powers through blissful periods which shall never end.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XII.

**R**AISE your stormy blasts, ye adverse winds,  
 undisturbed now Otho hears your swelling  
 sounds. Elevated by virtue, he repels their force,  
 and stands superior to the rude noise. Meek Re-  
 signation, with modest mien, tunes his harp to  
 soothing strains. He salutes correction as an an-  
 gel-guest, whose sharp edge strips from Pleasure's  
 fascinating form the false illusive glare, and assists to  
 hush discordant passions by acquiescence to the will  
 of Heaven.

Never will I leave this quiet retreat, said Sabi-  
 na with a sigh ! here shall I spend the residue of  
 my days ; and here my ashes at last shall rest, be-  
 side my childrens sacred dust. Whilst I hold ideal  
 converse with what I have lost, my spirit soars a-  
 bove mortality ; Death and the Grave lose their  
 dread ; I grow familiar with worlds unknown.  
 Otho ceased to urge her departure ; nor would  
 Rutha leave him behind. Friendship so tuned  
 their souls to unison, Joy had not power to ex-  
 pand either breast till fully imparted ; and Misery  
 lost her keen edge when each equally claimed a  
 share.

One evening they sat in the bower, viewing the  
 gradual decline of light, which they thought a  
 proper

proper emblem of the life of man. A chariot arrived, which claimed their attention ; from which Prince Gelin issued, and flew to their arms. — Hail ! much-loved Prince, said Otho with a voice of joy. Blessed be that friendly genius which moved you to revisit this silent vale. How fares your Royal Sire, the fair Zila, and your infant-train ?

I come from the King, said Gelin, to conduct you, my dear benefactor, to an asylum of peace, where your aged head, like a mariner escaped from the perils of the sea, shall securely repose, and view henceforth unmoved the storms of life. Offer no words to oppose my design ; but listen to a wondrous tale, which Providence has unveiled to give you joy.

As the charms of royal power could not detain the King from his accustomed pursuits, often with his revered tutor did he spend the silent night in contemplations most sublime.—One night, prompted by some invisible power, he spoke as follows. Sleep, O Albosad, has fled from mine eyes. An uncommon desire at present urges me to visit the spot where Simplicius resided. Whilst the moon sheds a pale ray over the world, let us depart, and ruminate on joys that are past, and bewail the imperfect state of human virtue. They left the palace unknown ; and drawing nigh the enchanting spot, beheld the lustre of the moon, reflected from the blue streams of the pond which  
flowed



flowed in the middle of the garden. Whilst they stood surveying the pleasing prospect, a voice of woe roused their attention. From many a broken sigh proceeded these words.

O powerful conscience ! whither shall I fly to avoid thy awful sting ? Thou inward monitor that appals the guilty, wretched is the man that incurs thy angry frown. What avails the splendours I have purchased by injustice ? Tortured on my downy pillow, I fly to things inanimate in vain. I have violated my faith to the dead ; defrauded Otho of his due : hence misery unmixed preys on my peace ; and like the first arch-fiend, within the blooming paradise of God, I feel in my own bosom all the rage of hell.

Concern for the sad complainer moved the King's heart. Alas ! by desire pushed open a gate in the garden ; and ere he was aware they stood before his view. He fiercely arose, enraged at an intrusion so abrupt, till his eye beheld the King's royal robes : his pride was disarmed ; he threw himself at his feet.

Unhappy mourner ! said the King, with pain have I heard your complaint, since it mocks the feeble extent of my power to relieve your despair. To assuage the pangs of a wounded spirit is only the province of heaven's high King ; yet unfold your story to mine ear, perhaps superior aid may assist me in conducting you to peace.

I i

Oh !

Oh ! where is that blessed region ? said the unhappy object. Sacred Majesty, point out the path ; then dispose of the fruit of my guilt as seemeth meet to the eye of wisdom. Let your Majesty retire to the house, where to your ear I shall freely ease my conscience of its sad burden.— The King moved forward in silence, reflecting with sorrow, that the moon's serene ray, with the harmony of the heavenly orbs, gave no truce to the pangs of despair. When the King entered the well-known residence of the sage Simplicius, all was turned to elegance and show. He placed the King on a chair of ebony ; and, after a long pause, spoke as follows.

Some courteous angel, anxious for human felicity, has forced your Majesty to lose your rest, and listen to the anguish of my soul. Oh ! that my story might guard unhappy youth from deviating from the line of innocence ; since earth, with all her fluctuating joys, though flavoured to the highest pitch of sense, falls short to balance, for a single hour, the self-accusing stings of conscience roused.

My name is *Agefilas*. My father was a subject of Agendemon's, and occupied a post of honour in the kingdom. When his Majesty assisted a neighbouring prince, I went abroad with Alonzo, the son of Otho ; both of us under the command of Nicanor, a valiant leader from Agendemon. His lofty soul was ambitious of meriting fame, and  
is

is now justly arrived at the pinnacle of renown. He loved Alonzo, whose insinuating manners quickly engaged the heart. By his aid I was raised in the army, and tasted pleasures otherwise denied to my reach. Several successful exploits increased our riches; but that famous battle gained by Nicanor over Demoborus the savage, immortalized his name, and gave their rich booty to our plunder. The officers of high rank were rendered superior to the little cares of life. But Heraclus, an old officer, was sore wounded. He was from my own country, had been like a father to my youth, and in his distress I watched by him with the solicitude of a son. Vain were my efforts: in spite of medicinal aid, Death approached to seize his prey.

Agefilas, said he, my end draweth nigh; take heed to the last words of an old man, who, charmed with your merit and virtue, is about to give you a sacred trust. Impatient under my absence, my wife and daughter some time ago arrived here in this scene of war. I placed them safe in the castle of Tedonia, where nothing molested them ever since, except only on my account. Lately a fever carried my wife to the grave, leaving my child to mourn so irreparable a blow. Say, worthy youth, will you conduct my daughter to her native land? Deliver her to Orchilas, to whom she is betrothed. Noble is the youth, and he will reward your honour with lasting gratitude. But, O consider,

if thou artest deceitfully, never shalt thou escape Heaven's all-seeing eye.

I solemnly engaged to perform all his commands. He ordered me to reach him a casquet; from which he pulled a picture richly set, and likewise a large quantity of diamonds and jewels. This picture of my dear departed wife, said he, with those trifles, you will present to Emmira. This letter, which I wrote ere my strength failed, will convince her of your honour. — Dear Emmira! he exclaimed aloud, must I then see you no more? He fainted away with the violence of his emotions. I thought him dead, and wept in pure sympathy of a fate so severe. Soon after he recovered, and grew very calm; but died next morning by break of day. I beheld him laid in the tomb, with all the honours due to his birth and rank; then repaired to the castle, to fulfil his dying request. I found it a difficult task to gain admittance to Emmira, till I said, I had a special message from her father. Then a female friend led me, through many turnings and windings, to the apartment of Emmira. She arose at my approach. Though an eager anxiety dwelt in her eyes, she rivetted me to the ground by the insufferable radiance of their blaze. How fatal, O Sacred Majesty! to my future peace did that ill-timed interview prove!

She asked me a thousand questions concerning her father. I had no power to reply. Alas! my  
tidings

tidings were to dash every joy, were to pierce my own heart, to behold the tears of such angelic beauty! Alarmed at my dejection, she clasped her fair hands together, exclaiming aloud, How ominous, O stranger! is thy dumb sorrow! Gracious Providence preserve my dearest father! She sunk on a sofa, and shed a torrent of tears. This sight bereaved me of reason: I wept aloud, without reflecting on the folly of my conduct.

Who art thou, said her friend, that comest the dismal messenger of wo? Thou showest us Misery, with all her train, yet hidest the fatal source from whence she springs. Explain, lest we should hate thee for thy tale.

I threw myself at Emmira's feet, crying, Hate me not, incomparable Fair. Though the chance of war hath laid your father low, to the will of Heaven yours must resign.—She fainted away, whilst her friend made the castle re-echo back her groans — By our joint aid returning life sparkled in her tearful eye. I gave the letter to her friend, who read in broken accents these sad contents.

By the fate of war, my dear Emmira, I have received a mortal wound. Death advanceth fast, though stript of all his terrors; and with your best friend, will soon deprive you of a tender father. But fix your hopes on Heaven, by whose agency the blow was struck. There will you find



a parent, whose power to guide your youth is superior to mine, and whose love and favour shields the forlorn who humbly implores such divine aid. Waste not your youth with unavailing tears. I fall not undistinguished amongst the brave. The coward who shrinks from the sword's point, never gains a hero's name. In Honour's bright beams my sun of life expires ; nor shall the recollection of my deeds make Emmira blush in her father's halls. The bearer's soul is full of truth ; he is eager to gain glory and renown : he will conduct you to Orchilas ; confide in his honour ; and O be grateful to his worth ; for he too must close mine eyes. Alas ! my child, why art thou absent from thy dying father ? — Cease, Nature ; — stop your briny source, O tears ! — my heart will soon burst by death. — Farewel Emmira ! Angels of Heaven protect my dearest child.

The violence of grief threw her into a fever. I saw her no more for a season. When she recovered, I was introduced to her presence. She often made me repeat the last scenes of her father's life, which always drew a torrent of tears from her eyes. Oh ! how beautiful did she appear in the languid softness of filial woe ! Alas ! had I then known to what lengths my passion would have hurried me, I had fled from her presence for ever : but, prompted by an irresistible impulse to indulge the only tender sentiment I ever felt, it seemed virtue to admire what I thought so perfect.

At

At last she opened her heart to me without reserve, thanking Heaven for bestowing so valuable a friend upon her in the season of her sorrow; informed me, that her lover was in the country, having arrived after her father's departure; but, hating to be inactive, was, at that period, commanding a party at the siege of Culrona. He must be informed, said she, of my disaster, and desire to return to my native land. As all letters at this period are liable to inspection, will you, O worthy youth! repair to Orchilas, and give him a detail of my wo: fix the time and place of our departure, that I may fly from a country whose fatal earth intombs my dearest parents. — She wept; her emotion kept her from observing mine. I undertook to obey all her commands; and, fully instructed, left her presence, and gave way to despair, which mocks all language to express.

Yet, faithful to my honour pledged, I set out for the residence of Orchilas. My emotions on viewing a happy rival, deprived me a long time of speech; but, recovering, I informed him of all that had befallen Emmira; her grief, and strong desire to leave a country so fatal to her peace.

He found I was no stranger to his interest in her happiness, and acknowledged his gratitude to me in the most obliging terms. Continue, noble youth, said he, your attention a little longer: for though the motions of my soul accords but too well with Emmira's wish, honour forbids me quitting my post

post at present : We are going to attack a fort, where Glory allures the brave ; but Danger on every hand threatens the timid and irresolute. However laudable my motive for departure might be, the lover of Emmira must never risk the appellation of a coward's name. No ! spotless as the virtue of the maid, must his honour be who aspires to an object so high.

His refined sentiments inspired more envy. He is worthy, said I, even of Emmira. He gave me a letter to the maid, which my faithless heart for ever concealed from her view ; and I left him tortured with passions, which have since produced my total lapse from virtue.

O King ! the transition from virtue to vice must be progressive. The first deviation must occasion more pain than the pleasure which fatally seduced the heart ever can produce joy.

My ardent passion by degrees appeased the scruples of my mind, and made me resolve guiltfully to separate them for ever. I hired a passage in a ship going home ; then hastened to Emmira ; who received me with a transport of joy. I told her Orchillas was to meet us at the port, whither we would repair in a few weeks. The confidence she then reposed in me, the care and friendship with which I was treated, stifled all remaining reproaches for the part I was going to act.

Ere

Ere I left the country, I went to bid my friends adieu : amongst which selected number Alonzo was chief. My dear friend, said he, with a frankness peculiar to himself, my particular engagements detain me here much longer than you. I bequeath to your charge those treasures I have gained ; deliver them to Otho as a pledge of his son, who will follow as quick as possible. He gave me jewels and money to a vast amount. I accepted the trust, and took an affectionate leave of my friend. Alas ! I saw him again no more.

When we arrived at the port, Orchilas was all we waited for. Emmira, with sweetness fit to humanize a savage, seemed to chide his strange delay. Having preconcerted my plan, a servant from the camp arrived, with a gloomy aspect. They trembled with terror, whilst I retired to learn the cause. I acted my part so well, that on my return I burst into tears. Emmira demanded the cause, with an eagerness I durst not trifle with. Orchilas is sore wounded said I, and cannot keep his appointment. She fainted with surprise and grief at the news : too happy youth, thought I, with what pleasure would I expire to be so blessed in death.

I told Almeda he was really dead ; who thought it better to inform Emmira at once than torture her with the horrors of suspense. The servant, as instructed, gave this melancholy detail, That he beheld him laid in the tomb. My conduct gave

no suspicion ; they swallowed the bait, and thought inquiry useless. Her picture, set with diamonds, confirmed the sad tidings, which I had previously sent for, in her name, to make some necessary alterations before she left the country, and which he, suspecting no guile, gave to the messenger. — Her grief was lively and affecting. Had I not firmly intended to repair, by the most constant affection, the shock I then gave her heart, I should have died with sorrow. — Alas ! I have beheld mine error ; have lived to see the vain attempt of consoling a heart of sensibility for the loss of what it fondly loved.

By the aid of Almeda I persuaded her to sail, as the voyage would recover her health and spirits. She consented, and I grew almost mad with joy. — Once deviating from the strict path, where will we not run ? The wealth I had in trust from Alonzo I meant to convert to my own use, that splendid elegance might charm Emmira, and divert her thoughts from what I had made her lose.

A storm obliged us to land on the skirts of this kingdom. I hired lodgings suitable to her taste ; then told Almeda, who by this time was much my friend, how sincerely I loved Emmira. And as she never could be united to Orchilas, I flattered myself my constant affection might alleviate her present wo. Almeda approved of my passion, and promised me her aid with her friend. But Emmira wept at the proposal, begged of me not to deprive



deprive her of a friend, by wishing for a nearer alliance. — Alas ! I loved her too well to give over a fruit which had cost me so dear. My solicitude at last prevailed : she gave me her hand ; but her heart seemed lost to joy. An air of grief veiled her lovely features, and filled me with sadness.

I perceived the vanity of human wishes ; how visionary schemes of fancied happiness may be thwarted by a thousand inevitable blows. Fair in ideal vision shine the fruit of joy ; but ere we can pull them from the stalk, they lose their flavour, or elude our taste.

Hearing the charming retreat of Jedonia was to be sold, I made higher offers than any other, and purchased it from those who managed the state, having by the death of the philosopher become the property of the crown. Emmira seemed pleased with her situation. I imagined my ardent affection would at last gain her heart. Delusive vain hopes, which never were accomplished !

I called in the assistance of art to embellish such natural beauties, that various objects might excite her attention. Ah, me ! she sought the most solitary shade, without the company of her friend, solicitous to be alone to feast upon wo.

I bitterly lamented that stubborn sorrow which deprived me of her heart to Almeda ; who re-

plied, that time would be more prevalent than useless argument, having herself in vain urged her to throw away such unavailing wo.—Remorse and disquiet tore my breast, to have ruined her peace, without gaining the end my fraud pointed at.

Two years after this she fell into a lingering disorder, which soon put a period to her life, and tore at once from my false hopes the sanguinary veil. Alarmed at the sad change, I called the aid of physic in vain. I was inconsolable. Tears flowed like rivers from mine eyes. She beheld my distress; she pitied my wo; and seizing my hand, thus addressed me.

Grieve not, my friend, because my glass is run; because Eternal Wisdom calls me to the skies. Death breaks those bonds which unhappily united us. My affections were buried in the tomb, which constantly robbed you of your due. Last night I dreamed my father's shade sternly approached us; me he meant to pull forcibly away, which you opposed with all your might. Cease, vain mortal! he said, and frowned: my child is ready to rejoin me, and must not be detained.—The agitation I felt in the struggle awaked me in a tremor. But I feel my end approaching. Accept my grateful thanks, O Agesilas! for your kind attention to me; for which Heaven will reward you when I am no more.—Farewell, she meant to have said; but a fainting-fit stopped her speech.  
She

She revived a while; but they succeeded each other rapidly, in one of which she expired.

I grew frantic; committed actions too extravagant to utter; interred her in that superb monument, where I sat whole days bewailing my misfortune. Almeda, who herself was drowned in wo, tried to alleviate mine; but finding her rhetoric ineffectual to pull me away, kept me company in the sad employment. In the rage of grief I uttered words which discovered my treachery.—Horror filled her gentle soul, and made her tears from different sources flow.

But, lost to myself, I did not perceive her drooping health. She fell like a flower in autumn, torn up by a surly blast. I laid her beside Emmira, and sit often in the hollow part of the tomb, mourning their hapless fate. Oh! Emmira, I exclaim; thou sun-beam of beauty! art thou then pale in the tomb, blasted by the hand of him who would have died to save thee?—Whither art thou fled, O matchless friends! Celestial pure spirits, deign to whisper peace to a wretch who feels the burden of life too heavy to bear.

Thus, O King, am I punished for my crimes. Love, Despair, and Grief, torture me by turns. Guilt humbles me in midst of splendour; and Conscience, wounded, drives away repose.

Dismal

Dismal is thy case, unhappy mortal! said the King; yet drive that horrid fiend Despair away. From a source unknown to you, I perceive a ray of hope; cherish its enlivening beam till my pleasure be heard. But see, Aurora gilds the mountains, I must fly to the palace ere my departure be known.

Next day he sent for Agefilas to court. My uncle, Sylvander, Albofad, Melibeus, and I, were the only witnesses of the solemn scene. Horror was painted on his brow, which had silvered his head with the white locks of age. He prostrated himself before the King, who thus spoke from the throne.

Arise, hapless victim! tremble no longer under the lash of Conscience. Though thou hast rashly tasted pleasure, condemned by Reason, Conscience, and every principle of humanity, implore the mercy of the Most High, against whose pure laws thou hast erred; but who only can alleviate those bitter pangs thou justly sufferest for thy crimes. Admire the favour of Heaven, that vice has not hardened thy heart against conviction, and reprobated thee beyond the hope of pardon.

Thou canst not make restitution to the dead, or recompense the inmates of the silent tomb; but haste, and restore to Otho what thou hast unjustly detained. Whilst thou didst waste his treasures accumulating iniquity, alas! the meagre form of Adversity

sity reduced him low, and restrained his benevolent heart from acts of mercy.

Whilst the King spoke, a torrent of tears fell from Agefilas's eyes. Sighs for a season choked his utterance. At last he cried, Blessed tears ! I welcome your approach : ye melt my heart to tender sorrow, and seem the harbingers of long-lost peace. Where, O King ! shall I find Otho ? with joy shall I quit all I possess. Let my person submit to the punishment of the law ; racks and tortures are mild correctors compared to a soul a prey to remorse.

The King informed him of your situation. He offered to go and throw himself at your feet, and avow his guilt. It was deemed more expedient to send for you with all speed. I offered myself on that agreeable embassy ; and having obtained his Majesty's permission, I have lost no time by the way.

Make haste, then, my worthy benefactor. Frustrate no longer the schemes of Providence ; which, through the varied trials of your life, has interposed beyond your utmost hopes. Let Fortitude and Joy elate your soul, since Friendship pure, stripped of all base alloy, awaits to crown your evening-hours at Zathia, and make you anticipate beneath the skies the blessed fruition of angelic minds.

OTHO.



OTHO.

What wonders, O Prince ! has thy tale poured on our ears ! Who can examine the counsels of the Most High ; or sufficiently adore his providential rule ! Darkness and the grave cannot veil objects from his view. Should the unjust fly to the centre of the earth, the arrow of Omnipotence can dash the cup of joy from his touch, and mingle it with gall.

Rutha, let us obey the call of Heaven. Let us fly to Alranchid, the generous King ; or rather to the Hermit, our exalted friend.

RUTHA.

As the sun, emerging from dark clouds, dispels the gloom with his cheartful ray ; so doth the hand of Heaven elevate the heart of Otho, lift from obscurity his languid head, and offer to his view a haven of repose.

To dwell in the desert with my friend, have I not shunned the wisdom of Alranchid ? But let us fly together ; nothing remains in our native clime fit to balance the friendship of a king by virtue superior to the charm of royal power.

Sabina wept as she left the tomb where was deposited her childrens dust ; but, consoled by the most sublime precepts, she wiped away the falling tear.

Alranchid

Alranchid received them with that glow of affection, which, to hearts fit to relish such exalted pleasure, had a charm beyond what the gaiety of a court can convey. The basis of their friendship was sacred virtue, matured by time and adverse scenes; like wine, by age refined from sediment or gross alloy :

Gelin and Zila, Ranselmo and Amana, whose mild amiable virtues excited affection and delight; Albofad and Melibeus, whose rare fidelity and tried attachment rendered the noble groupe complete.

Agefilas, covered with shame, threw himself at Otho's feet; made a total renunciation of all his effects, with an ample confession of his crimes.

Accept this bond, Otho, said the King. I here bequeath what is your right, to you, and to your heirs for ever. But know, Agefilas, I could have wrested from you, by the arm of power, your ill-got wealth, and turned you adrift a wretched wanderer through an unfeeling world. But I must cherish the seeds of Virtue in your soul : cultivate their long-neglected growth, till they spring anew, and restore you to peace. Despair not, O suffering mortal ! of Heaven's pardon ; but, humbled in the dust, ask it with fervour. Behold the transient date of human felicity ! Think you was formed for nobler attachments than earth can yield, though gained in the paths of honour.

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Hew

How short the triumph when purchased by vice,  
whilst the bitter fruit remains for ever with an en-  
venomed sting !

He fell on his face before the King : his tears  
bedewed the hem of his robe. — Otho moved for-  
ward, and raised him up, saying, Give me leave,  
O King ! to take Agesilas with me to the bower :  
never shall he seek another home, nor leave what  
he prizes so high. Come then, thou restored  
transgressor ; Otho will mingle his prayers with  
thine, to implore serenity to your mind. Come,  
thou once-gay friend of Alonzo's, recover the ap-  
probation of thine own mind, the blessed foretaste  
of Heaven's favour. Thou shalt talk to me of  
my son, and bring to my memory the days that  
are past, when his heroic arm subdued the foe.—  
Oh Alonzo ! dost thou arise from the dust, to scat-  
ter plenty on the head of Otho !

#### AGESILAS.

How forcible is virtue so sublime ! It subdues  
the heart, as the sun melts the icicles from the  
high rocks. Noblest of men, take me with you ;  
a conduct so exalted will excite emulation, and  
inspire me with confidence in seeking the favour  
of the Most High. But how shall I repair the in-  
jury done Orchilas ? Alas ! his heart will faint  
with wo, to think of the treachery of Emmira.  
How shall I let him know ? Her gentle soul never  
harboured the least shadow of deceit.

Otho

Otho undertook to search him out, and carried Agefilas with him to Tedonia. He spent most of his time at the tomb of Emmira. His soul grew composed, and free from horror; but his health drooped apace. He died a victim to the conflict of his mind, and was buried beside Emmira and her friend; whilst Otho often visits their tomb, and drops on their silent urn a sympathetic tear.

Rutha met Orchilas by accident; who, hearing of the wisdom of Alranchid, came to his court. The loss of Emmira, with her supposed treachery, had weaned his heart from ambitious pursuits, and made him fly his accustomed haunts, to court wisdom in a new form.

Rutha carried him to Otho, who received him as a guest; nor ever after suffered him to leave Tedonia. By degrees he unfolded the mystery of Emmira and Agefilas, which touched his heart with an agony of woe. As he could learn nothing concerning them after the siege of Culrona, he had spent some years in that country in fruitless inquiry. He then embarked for his native land; where they never having appeared, he concluded they had eloped together to some unknown spot, to elude his pursuit, or else they must have perished by the way. Sad anxiety fretted his heart: he found a vacuity in all human pleasures. If the gentle virtues of Emmira were not proof against deceit, constancy was not to be found below. But when he heard of her matchless affection, it awa-

ked his half-extinguished flame whilst he sat by her tomb, bedewing it with fruitless tears. Otho, aided by the King, and the select groupe, made his grief subside into a pleasing melancholy, not unfriendly to wisdom, which he neither strove to indulge nor divert. Smoothed by time, the remembrance ceased to wound. Though he sighed as a man conscious of his loss, he bore it with philosophy and wisdom. He strove to regulate his mind by those excellent precepts that governed his noble companions, whose lives exhibited the powerful sway of Reason and Religion over the passions.

Inseparable, at last Otho and Rutha dwell together. The first, superior to Misfortune's frowns, looks back astonished at the paths he trod. O Rutha ! he often exclaims, when I behold the chain of events which has at last conducted me to peace, my silent adorations fly to Heaven. But whilst the mingled rapture swells my heart, your matchless friendship gives a feast of joy. Hear, Heaven ! and if impiety stain not my wish, may we inseparable be above ; admire together those amazing works, which then will ope to our enlightened view ; in concert tune our souls to endless praise to the Great Author of the wondrous whole.

Thus Otho vented the effusions of his heart, whilst Rutha's presence heightened every joy. — Alranchid often visited his friends, and tasted felicity



licity seldom the lot of kings. But language would fail to paint the intellectual feast souls so congenial tasted together : They reviewed the painful events that were past, as a pilgrim, having reached his destined abode, smiles at the perils of the way. Otho adored High Heaven for turning seeming evils into real good.

Father of mercies ! conduct him to the last stage unmolested with sinister incidents, enliven the latest hours of decaying age. Assisted from on high, may he anticipate the unmixed joy which awaits the just in the regions of pure felicity ; where the transient evils he tasted at different periods below, will fade from his mind, as the horrors of a midnight-storm disappear when Phœbus's early beams gladden the world with harmony.

T H E E N D.

1893

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading. Appears to be a list or series of entries.



